



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**NORTH KOREA'S JUCHE IDEOLOGY  
AND THE GERMAN RE-UNIFICATION EXPERIENCE**

by

Stephan A. Juetten

June 2008

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> June 2008	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> North Korea's Juche Ideology and the German Re-Unification Experience			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Stephan A. Juetten				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b> A	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> <p>This thesis analyzes potential socio-cultural discord upon eventual Korean national reunification, owing to the predominance of the cultic state ideology of Juche in North Korea. Juche has become the fundamental framework of orientation for North Koreans. The hypothesis investigated is that, upon eventual Korean reunification, significant problems of national social cohesion, at least as serious as those faced by the reunified Germany since 1990, should be expected. To this day — nearly two decades, and an estimated €1.5 trillion after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 — reunified Germany is recurrently affected by socio-cultural conflicts, based on ingrained values, past ideological conditioning, and resulting emotional ties and behavior patterns of the former East and West German societies. Juche could foster similar or graver phenomena in a reunified Korean society, manifest in mutual and estranging grievances, ultimately impeding successful reunification. However, the Kim dynasty's established virtuosity in adapting and developing Juche might in some circumstances combine with Juche elements of potential appeal to both Korean societies, such as national self-reliance. Instead of constituting an ideological barrier, Juche's pan-Korean components might hypothetically be transformed into a common ground to alleviate societal conflict and eventually facilitate Korean national reunification.</p>				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Juche, Chu-ch'e, Utopian Idea, Ideology, Cult, Fundamentalism, Kim Dynasty, Kim Cult, Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, North Korea, South Korea, ROK, DPRK, East-Germany, West-Germany, FRG, GDR, Re-unification, Socio-Cultural Re-Unification, Unification Crisis, Wall Inside The Minds, Ideological Barrier			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 124	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

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**NORTH KOREA'S JUCHE IDEOLOGY  
AND THE GERMAN RE-UNIFICATION EXPERIENCE**

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Commander, German Navy

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(FAR EAST, SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND PACIFIC)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
June 2008**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes potential socio-cultural discord upon eventual Korean national reunification, owing to the predominance of the cultic state ideology of Juche in North Korea. Juche has become the fundamental framework of orientation for North Koreans. The hypothesis investigated is that, upon eventual Korean reunification, significant problems of national social cohesion, at least as serious as those faced by the reunified Germany since 1990, should be expected. To this day — nearly two decades, and an estimated €1.5 trillion after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 — reunified Germany is recurrently affected by socio-cultural conflicts, based on ingrained values, past ideological conditioning, and resulting emotional ties and behavior patterns of the former East and West German societies. Juche could foster similar or graver phenomena in a reunified Korean society, manifest in mutual and estranging grievances, ultimately impeding successful reunification. However, the Kim dynasty's established virtuosity in adapting and developing Juche might in some circumstances combine with Juche elements of potential appeal to both Korean societies, such as national self-reliance. Instead of constituting an ideological barrier, Juche's pan-Korean components might hypothetically be transformed into a common ground to alleviate societal conflict and eventually facilitate Korean national reunification.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School's faculty, who have, over the past twelve months, exposed me to a captivating body of knowledge in the political sciences in general, and in Asian security issues in particular. Each individual professor has provided profound insights, fresh perspectives, and food for thought.

Special thanks are owed to my thesis Co-Advisors, Professor Edward A. Olsen and Professor David S. Yost. Professor Olsen's continuous encouragement, guidance, and expertise were particularly valuable to define, organize, and focus the endeavor of writing this thesis. At the same time, Professor Yost's dedication, mentorship, and appreciation provided me with a strong source of constant challenge and motivation in writing this thesis.

Finally, I am grateful for the tremendous support of my wife, Andrea, and of my daughter, Johanna. I could not have succeeded without them.

„Wir leben alle unter dem gleichen Himmel, aber wir haben nicht alle den gleichen Horizont.“ (We all live under the same sky, but we do not all have the same horizon.)

Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967)

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# **I. JUCHE: A FUNDAMENTAL FRAMEWORK OF ORIENTATION THAT MAY AFFECT KOREAN NATIONAL RE-UNIFICATION**

## **A. PURPOSE**

This thesis examines Juche — the predominant North Korean state ideology. In particular, the thesis assesses whether and to what extent Juche offers a potential means to facilitate prospective Korean reunification. Conversely, to what extent might Juche constitute an ideological barrier to be overcome before effective re-unification of the divided Korean societies can succeed?

The hypothesis investigated is that Juche has become a framework of orientation so fundamental to North Koreans that it is reasonable to expect that it could raise problems of national social cohesion after reunification, at least as serious as those faced by the unified Germany since the end of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), also known as East Germany, in 1990.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

### **1. The Wall Inside The Minds: The German Paradigm of National Unity**

The German re-unification experience suggests that ideological indoctrination, resulting values, and emotional ties can persist a long time, and may be displaced by democratic freedom, economic growth and the joys of consumerism only superficially. To this day, although the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, East and West Germans alike are recurrently affected by “The Wall Inside The Minds”<sup>1</sup> — conflicts between individuals or groups of the former East and West German societies based on ingrained values, past ideological conditioning, and resulting emotional ties and behavior patterns. The German case suggests that the phenomenon of “The Wall Inside The Minds” might constitute a significant cause of individual and societal grievance. It might therefore hinder the reunification of Korean society. It is a factor beyond mere economic disparity that deserves attention.

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<sup>1</sup> The German phrase *die Mauer in den Köpfen* is translated here as *The Wall Inside The Minds*. The term reflects the substantial challenges and disparities in the unified Federal Republic of Germany between East and West Germans as a people, between their mindsets and characters, their historical narratives, and their goals and virtues in life. Some of these differences were strengthened rather than weakened when the East German state dissolved in 1990.

Indeed, Pyongyang's Juche ideology could foster a similar phenomenon in Korean society. This in turn might subsequently cause different types of mutual and estranging grievances among and between North and South Koreans, leading to social antagonisms and ultimately impeding successful reunification. On the other hand, in some circumstances certain elements of the Juche idea (such as self-reliance and national unity) might appeal to a large number of people in both Korean societies. Some of its homogeneous cultural, ethical, ethnic, and religious elements could in fact present a common ground to alleviate societal conflict and eventually facilitate reunification.

This thesis offers a contribution to the current Korean reunification debate. In particular it focuses on the political importance of mitigating potential societal grievances upon Korean reunification.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***a. Juche: History, Theory, Practice, and Future***

The Juche idea was first advanced publicly by Kim Il-sung in 1955.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to literature that classifies Juche merely as a North Korean version of Marxist Communism, Mitchell Lerner offers a more discriminating view. In his analysis, Kim Il-sung's ideological break with Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology was established through: (1) rejecting the Leninist primacy of the vanguard party; and (2) discarding Marx's focus on the working class as the driving forces of the revolution. Instead, Kim Il-sung established himself as the Suryong<sup>3</sup> in a direct lineage from the ancient and mythical Koguryo<sup>4</sup> dynasty to his own regime, while simultaneously modifying Marxism and Leninism according to his own practical needs. Hence, as the legitimate Suryong, and as the Great Leader of the revolution, Kim Il-sung would unite the

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<sup>2</sup> Kim Il-sung, *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work - Speech to Party Propaganda and Agitation Workers, December 28, 1955* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 89. Per Lee, Suryong is the ancient Koguryo term for the king as being the maximum authority. For the Suryong's role as the supreme leader and ultimate authority, see: Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), 30.

<sup>4</sup> Koguryo (also Goguryeo) was one of the ancient Three Kingdoms of Korea. Koryo (also Goryeo) is a shortened form thereof. The English name Korea derives from Koryo.

Korean proletarian and peasant masses and lead them in their development of collective revolutionary consciousness, and in their movement towards their socialist destiny.<sup>5</sup>

Experts have described Juche as an “ideological construct” of self-reliance and national identity. Its concept of self-reliance calls for being individually and collectively free from external influences, pressures, and conventions of deference towards other nations.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Bruce Cumings traces the term *chuch’e* back to ancient Korean history and makes a case for connecting the idea with Neo-Confucian virtues of loyalty, hierarchical order, and the power of the mind and heart.<sup>7</sup> Selig S. Harrison holds that Juche has been developed from a mere idea of “nationalist ideology” into a “state of mind” and a “national religion.”<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Han S. Park observes Juche’s strong nationalistic view of “the nation as an indivisible and deified sacred entity.”<sup>9</sup> Cumings further connects *chuch’e*<sup>10</sup> to the Chinese “late-nineteenth-century self-strengthening movement” and to the Japanese Kokutai-rooted pre-World War II ultra-nationalism.<sup>11</sup> Lerner maintains that Juche and its prescribed virtues have been developed as the lens through which North Koreans perceive life, society, and politics. “Thus the importance of Juche in North Korean society is difficult to overstate.”<sup>12</sup> His evaluation is supported by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who explains (following Walker Percy) that cognizant perception is “an act of recognition, a pairing in which an object (or an event, an act, an emotion) is identified by placing it against the background of an appropriate symbol.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mitchell Lerner, “A failure of perception: Lyndon Johnson, North Korean ideology, and the Pueblo incident,” *Diplomatic History* 25, no. 4 (October 1, 2001): 655. For the supreme leader’s role to unite the proletarian and peasant masses, and lead them towards their revolutionary goal to construct a socialist state. See also: *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Pyongyang, Korea: Social Science Publishing House, 1985), 376.

<sup>6</sup> Lerner, “A failure of perception,” 647.

<sup>7</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*.

<sup>8</sup> Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Han S. Park, “The Nature and Evolution of Juche Ideology,” in *North Korea Ideology, Politics, Economy*, ed. Han S. Park (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 30. According Cumings, “Juche is the North Korean spelling of *chuch’e*.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

<sup>12</sup> Lerner, “A failure of perception,” 656.

<sup>13</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 215.

Additional support comes from Ilpyong Kim, who asserts that Juche is North Korea's "symbolic guide for every activity of revolution and construction."<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, Juche's intense religious dimension is acknowledged by historian Tai Sung An, using the analogy of "the holy scripture."<sup>15</sup> This religious interpretation of Juche is further supported by Philo Kim, who reasons that "*juche* ideology can be called the 'religion of suryong'." He concludes: "It is highly probable that the religious characteristics of Juche ideology in North Korea may bring about severe social conflict and psychological depression in the process of reunification."<sup>16</sup>

The 2006 International Religious Freedom Report substantiates the religious weight of Juche: "The cult of personality of Kim Jong Il and his father remained important ideological underpinnings of the regime, at times seeming to resemble tenets of a state religion."<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the 2005 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom report cites North Korean interviewees' "astonishment that anyone in North Korea would practice a belief-system [that is, a belief system other than Juche] challenging the reigning cult of personality."<sup>18</sup> Finally, it seems remarkable that Adherents.com places Juche at number ten of the world religions, right behind Sikhism, but in front of Judaism in terms of numbers of adherents.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ilpyong J. Kim, *Communist Politics in North Korea Praeger special studies in international politics and government* (New York: Praeger, 1975), 49.

<sup>15</sup> Tai Sung An, *North Korea in Transition: From Dictatorship to Dynasty (Contributions in Political Science)* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 24.

<sup>16</sup> Philo Kim, "An Analysis Of Religious Forms Of Juche Ideology In Comparison With Christianity," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "International Religious Freedom Report 2006," <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71344.htm> (accessed May 12, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> David Hawk, "Thank You Father Kim Il Sung: Eyewitness Accounts of Severe Violations of Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion in North Korea," *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* (November 2005): iv-v, [http://www.helpinghandskorea.org/publications/NKwitnesses\\_WGraphics.pdf](http://www.helpinghandskorea.org/publications/NKwitnesses_WGraphics.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Adherents.com, "Major Religions of the World. Ranked by Number of Adherents," [http://adherents.com/Religions\\_By\\_Adherents.html](http://adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html) (accessed May 11, 2008). Number of adherents: Sikhism – 23 million, Juche – 19 million, Judaism – 14 million. Adherents.com describes itself as an Internet initiative, the second most frequently visited general religion site on the Internet, with an average of 13,500 unique visitors per day, not affiliated with any religious, political, or educational organization. 19 million adherents equals about 80 % of North Korea's current population. Also: Kim, "An Analysis Of Religious Forms," 140. The numbers from Adherents.com correlate roughly with Philo Kim's 2002 estimates of 75% adherents (25% "fanatic", 25% "who have both faith and doubt", 25% "sham believers").



Following Kim Il-sung's death in 1994, the transition of power in North Korea amounted to "a bloodless coup."<sup>20</sup> Like his father, Kim Jong-il asserted that he would be the ultimate authority in articulating the state ideology. Selig Harrison refers to the Songun conception articulated by the "Dear Leader"<sup>21</sup> as a "new constitutional structure in which the armed forces provide his personal power base and have replaced the Worker's Party as the focus of political authority."<sup>22</sup> The smooth transfer of power in 1994 and Kim Jong-il's subsequently unchallenged regime seem to confirm two important characteristics of Juche. First, Juche provides legitimacy to the Kim family's dynastic succession, now and most probably in the future; Kim Jong-il has three sons, Kim Jong Nam (35), Kim Jong Jol (25), Kim Jong Un (22).<sup>23</sup> Second, Juche is adaptable and can be utilized to provide a legitimate ideological framework to meet present and future political challenges and needs. Accordingly, in 2003 Harrison observed that Kim Jong-il pursues a "reform of stealth." Harrison predicted that "his [Kim Jong-il's] measured reform process is likely to gain momentum during his tenure and set the stage for a more formal doctrinal shift to pragmatic economic policies either under his leadership or that of his successors."<sup>24</sup>

***b. Juche: Ideological Barrier or Unifying Ideology – Implications for Eventual Korean Reunification***

In their 2001 study entitled "Psychosocial Aspects of Korean Reunification," Do-yeong Kim and Hye-jung Oh concluded that the "psychosocial unification" of North and South Koreans might be difficult to achieve, due to a "noticeable division in implicit attitudes" towards

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<sup>20</sup> Harrison, *Korean Endgame*, 53.

<sup>21</sup> North Korea officially refers to Kim Il-sung as the "Great Leader". His son, Kim Jong-il, became a member of the Seventh Supreme People's Assembly in February 1982. At this time Kim Jong-il grew to be North Korea's heir apparent and assumed the title "Dear Leader".

<sup>22</sup> Harrison, *Korean Endgame*, 53.

<sup>23</sup> Dirk Godder, "North Korea silent over Kim Jong Il successor," *India eNews*, Seoul, South Korea, February 14, 2007, <http://www.indiaenews.com/asia/20070214/39480.htm> (accessed May 12, 2008) "Experts suspect that Kim's oldest son, the 35-year-old Kim Jong Nam, might have fallen into disgrace with his father after he was arrested a few years ago in Japan on fake passport charges. The other two sons, Kim Jong Jol, 25, and Kim Jong Un, 22, are from a different mother than Kim Jong Nam and are considered too young to be designated as Kim's successor."

<sup>24</sup> Harrison, *Korean Endgame*, 53.

each other.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Gabriel Jonsson cites South Korean scholar Kang Suk Rhee,<sup>26</sup> who holds that “North and South Korean leaders have by and large ignored the question of value integration at the expense of structural integration.”<sup>27</sup> This view is supported by Roy R. Grinker, who advises South Koreans not to repeat the West German mistake prior to German reunification of “ignoring the extent to which half a century of division can produce significant social and cultural differences between the two sides of a nation.”<sup>28</sup>

Referring to the work of Kook Sin Kim, who — in his study of the 1990 Yemeni reunification — advocated measures “to resolve the sense of heterogeneity among ordinary people,”<sup>29</sup> Jonsson also acknowledges that “preparing for unification and encouraging human exchanges are indeed important tasks.”<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the Finnish scholar of German reunification, Henri Vogt, also corroborates the importance of recognizing and addressing “significant social and cultural differences between the two sides of a nation.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Do-Yeong Kim and Hye-Jung Oh, “Psychological Aspects of Korean Reunification: Explicit and Implicit National Attitudes and Identity of South Koreans and North Korean Defectors,” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 7, no. 3 (2001): 284.

<sup>26</sup> Kang Suk Rhee, “Korea’s Unification: The Applicability of the German Experience,” *Asian Survey* 33, no. 4 (1993): 365-66.

<sup>27</sup> Gabriel Jonsson, *Towards Korean Reconciliation: Socio-Cultural Exchanges and Cooperation* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2006), 3. According to Jonsson’s interpretation of Rhee (1993), “value integration...describes promotion of a feeling of a common race, language, culture, history and set of customs and traditions revolving around shared concepts of peace, freedom and prosperity.”

<sup>28</sup> Roy Richard Grinker, *Korea and Its Futures Unification and the Unfinished War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), xv.

<sup>29</sup> Jonsson, *Towards Korean Reconciliation*, 46, citing: Kook Sin Kim, “Yemen t’ongil pangsig-i hanbando t’ongir-e chunun sisajom,” [“Suggestions from the Yemeni Way of Unification to Korean Unification”] in *Yemen t’ongir-ui munjejom* [Problems of Yemen Unification.] (Seoul: Minjok t’ongil yon’guwon, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Henri Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment: A Narrative of the Political Transformation in Eastern Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 116. According to Vogt, “nostalgia for what had been before has no doubt existed in all post-communist countries, but in Eastern Germany this mood has been even more prevalent than elsewhere. This *Ostalgie* (Ost = east), as the word’s specific coinage implies, has been a very widely debated and analysed phenomenon in Germany and in the German media. Even language has been affected by this: a number of new terms and expressions, such as *Vereinigungskrise* or *die Mauer in den Köpfen* (unification crisis; the Wall in the heads), have entered the German vocabulary.” Vogt bases his observations on Derek Lewis, “The German Language: From Revolt to Division,” in *The New Germany. Social, Political and Cultural Challenges of Unification*, ed. Derek Lewis and John R. P. McKenzie (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995).

*c. How Individuals Find Meaning — The Framework of People's Orientation*

Viktor E. Frankl, in his work on logotherapy,<sup>32</sup> examines how the individual's ability and motivation to endure suffering depends on his inner strength and values. Frankl cites Nietzsche's observation that "He who has a *why* to live for can bear with almost any *how*."<sup>33</sup> Frankl explores how an individual's self-conception, inner motivation, and values influence his actions. He further holds that man's mental health is based on the "tension" between his past accomplishments and the resulting expectations for future endeavors and achievements.

According to Frankl, "man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life."<sup>34</sup> Frankl highlights "the self-transcendence of human existence" and concludes that man can only achieve his aim of self-actualization as a by-product of self-transcendence by committing himself to "a cause to serve or another person to love."<sup>35</sup>

In the light of the previous discussion about the potentially significant social and cultural differences between the North and South Korean societies, the existing research on how an individual finds meaning holds essential implications for the issue of Korean national reunification. Frankl's observation of "meta-clinical problems" seems to give weight to the religious dimension of Juche: "Some of the people who nowadays call on a psychiatrist would have seen a pastor, priest or rabbi in former days. Now they often refuse to be handed over to a clergyman and instead confront the doctor with questions such as, 'What is the meaning of my life?'"<sup>36</sup> At the same time, Frankl's observation, informed by clinical experience, that "people

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<sup>32</sup> Viktor Emil Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, Inc., 1992), 108; (italics in the original). Frankl defines logotherapy as follows: "Logotherapy regards its assignment as that of assisting the patient to find meaning in his life. Inasmuch as logotherapy makes him aware of the hidden *logos* of his existence, it is an analytical process. To this extent, logotherapy resembles psychoanalysis. However, in logotherapy's attempt to make something conscious again it does not restrict its activity to *instinctual* facts within the individual's unconscious but also cares for *existential* realities, such as the potential meaning of his existence to be fulfilled as well as his *will* to meaning. ... Logotherapy deviates from psychoanalysis insofar as it considers man a being whose main concern consists in fulfilling a meaning, rather than in the mere gratification and satisfaction of drives and instincts, or in merely reconciling the conflicting claims of id, ego and superego, or in the mere adaptation and adjustment to society and environment."

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, as quoted in Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 84, (italics in the original).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

have enough to live by but nothing to live for; they have the means but no meaning”<sup>37</sup> seems to underline the importance of value integration upon Korean amalgamation.

Juche in itself, economic and other structural factors, and socio-cultural aspects of eventual Korean national reunification have received ample scholarly attention. There are few works, however, that acknowledge the significance of Juche for a successful Korean merger, let alone examine the importance of Juche as a potential source of ideas for Korean society as a whole upon reunification. This thesis aims to fill this gap, and hopes to trigger further scholarly interest and appreciation for the frequently ignored but nonetheless most important issue of social unity upon eventual Korean national reunification.

## **C. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

### **1. Methodology**

#### ***a. A Qualitative Analysis of Socio-Cultural Differences as Independent Variables for Successful Korean National Re-unification***

In order to establish a solid basis for discussion and to be able to subsequently draw valid conclusions, Chapter II analyzes the conceptual framework of North Korea’s Juche ideology and considers whether it is a utopian revolutionary idea, a socialist state ideology, or a comprehensive state religion. Juche’s apparently holistic power, authority, and penetration of North Korean individual and societal life deserve investigation. Chapter III reviews the German national reunification process since 1990 and assesses how and to what extent socio-cultural reunification has been achieved in the German case. It is relevant for the purpose at hand to investigate the roots and effects of the German issues known as the “Unification Crisis” or “The Wall Inside The Minds.” The findings of this retrospective analysis provide the analytical basis for the subsequent investigation of the prospective socio-cultural issues in the Korean reunification case. In Chapter IV judgments are offered as to what extent factors influential in the German experience of social reunification are present and applicable to today’s Korean societies. This includes considering the common conjecture that the North Korean “Wall Inside The Minds” might be significantly taller and thicker than the German one. Finally, Chapter V

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<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, as quoted in Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 84, (italics in the original), 142.

examines whether Juche could offer a common ground for North and South Koreans and help facilitate prospective national reunification, rather than constituting an ideological barrier between the societies on both sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Based on the experience of the German national reunification since 1990, including its effects on societal unity and national cohesion, a comparison with the Korean case may reveal to what degree similar effects should be expected upon Korean national reunification. Consequently, the dependent variables to be observed in the wake of Germany's reunification are national cohesion and socio-cultural integration. Prosperity, economic growth and political freedom are well quantifiable and generally uncontested independent variables, describing vital cornerstones to ultimately mold a unified society. Especially in light of Frankl's work, however, it is clear that materialistic and constitutional arrangements alone will not suffice. Shared values and convictions, common purposes, and an agreed national narrative are probably of greater importance. This study focuses on the less objective, harder to quantify, and easily disputable independent variables in the realm of national homogeneity and cohesion: above all, the magnitude of socio-cultural assimilation and social unity currently present in the Korean societies on both sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The resulting findings are then utilized to assess whether elements of the Juche ideology might in some circumstances serve as a means to level existing differences in order to surmount ideological barriers that might be causes of conflict upon Korean national reunification.

## **2. Sources**

### ***a. The Dilemma of Researching on the Hermit Kingdom***

For Juche's history and theory, primary and secondary sources are abundant. Moreover, more than one and a half decades after German national reunification, socio-cultural differences and conflicts in the German case have been well accounted for in literature. The same is true of sources concerning the quasi-religious facets of Juche and the psychological aspects of belief systems and ideologies. Due to the reclusive nature of the North Korean regime, however, Juche's current practice has to be deduced from secondary and tertiary sources. As with many studies on North Korea, accounts from defectors, as well as official North and South Korean sources, in conjunction with media sources, are utilized to construct an understanding of Juche's impact on and penetration of North Korean society and daily life. The nature of these sources

suggests an inherent bias towards the respective North or South Korean perspective. However, due to the relevance and the comprehensive historical validation of the German case, a comparative and qualitative analysis of potential societal discord and conflict upon eventual Korean reunification seems warranted. The aspiration of this study is not to quantify the expected cultural differences, but to analyze their prospects and to initiate a broad discussion about how to confront North Korean Juche to overcome socio-cultural differences between the two Korean societies.

## II. JUCHE: UTOPIAN REVOLUTIONARY IDEA, SOCIALIST STATE IDEOLOGY, OR STATE RELIGION?

The swift breakdown and peaceful dissolution of the German Democratic Republic (the GDR, also known as East Germany) — eventually effected by the people in the streets — seemed to communicate a clear message to the world. The Communist experiment had failed; *Realexistierender Sozialismus* (real existing Socialism) had finally laid down its arms and surrendered to western liberalism and capitalism.<sup>38</sup> Eric Cornell, the former Swedish chargé d'affaires in Pyongyang, labeled his own answer as to why the state socialist economies collapsed a “platitude:” “their system, based on Marxist ideology, lost the contest against the market economy.”<sup>39</sup> A wave of transition, coursing through Eastern Europe, swept over even the most loyal Soviet allies and Soviet republics. To the world’s amazement, within months of the Berlin Wall coming down, young emerging democracies throughout the former Warsaw Pact region were rapidly severing their Soviet-era Communist umbilical cords. The rapidity and enthusiasm with which the vast majorities of the populations were eager to jettison their ideological ballast seemed to convey the weak and superficial hold of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The prospects of a liberal democratic society, economic growth, and consumerism appeared to collapse the Communist regimes and their ideologies like a house of cards.

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<sup>38</sup> The term *Realexistierender Sozialismus* (real existing Socialism) was introduced by Soviet propaganda in the 1970s to designate the more open forms of government that had evolved in several Communist countries. The term was often used in order to differentiate traditional, conventional (or ideal) Socialism from the *de facto* Socialism existing in the Eastern bloc countries. *Real* referred to the fact that in reality, not all the utopian principles of Socialism and Communism could be implemented immediately. Accordingly, in the real world, the *real existing Socialism* would only be an interim arrangement before establishing the ideal Socialist society. The anti-Communist opposition used the term in a sense of ironic criticism. Other Communist regimes charged that such a watered down version of socialism compromised and betrayed Communism, and consequently chose to relax their alignment with the Soviet Union (e.g., the Democratic Republic of North Korea, the D.P.R.K.).

<sup>39</sup> Erik Cornell, *North Korea Under Communism: Report of an Envoy to Paradise* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), 109.

Accordingly, since the early 1990s, North Korea's implosion has been predicted routinely by political analysts and scholars alike.<sup>40</sup> After all, it could be expected that North Korea's similarly utopian and terminally ill Marxist-Leninist ideology, due to a failing economy and widespread famine, would prove to be equally incapable of fending off liberalization and democratization. However, against all odds and prophecies, North Korea's regime and its society have survived more than one and a half decades of economic isolation and struggle, agricultural and industrial decline, privation, and famine as "the world's last Stalinist regime."<sup>41</sup>

In a 2004 analysis, economist Nicholas Eberstadt explained that the "Economic Collapse"<sup>42</sup> that he had predicted in 1999 was averted by Pyongyang's massive currency

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<sup>40</sup> Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Persistence of North Korea," Policy Review, no. 127 (October 1, 2004): 23-24. Renowned political economist and North Korea expert Nicholas Eberstadt has frequently predicted North Korea's collapse since 1990. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=1&did=731115631&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1203705310&clientId=11969>, also: <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3436436.html> (accessed May 11, 2008). Also, Reuben F. Johnson, "Clock ticking for Kim's Korea," *Janes's Information Group*, January 24, 2008, [http://www.janes.com/news/security/countryrisk/jdw/jdw080124\\_1\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/news/security/countryrisk/jdw/jdw080124_1_n.shtml) (accessed May 11, 2008). Further, this recent Jane's publication cites a joint report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the US Institute for Peace, revealing that "China has 'contingency plans' in the event of North Korea's implosion." At the same time, "recent actions of Kim Jong-Il and other North Korean officials are being interpreted as signs that the regime is nearing its end," while "the 'Dear Leader' [Kim Jong-il] is in the process of moving financial resources to ensure that his assets are portable should he have to go into exile, according to some sources."

<sup>41</sup> Chol-hwan Kang and Pierre Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), xv. North Korea scholar Andrei Lankov maintains that "Applying the word 'Stalinism' to North Korea nowadays, however, is misleading. Though still a brutal tyranny engaged in nuclear brinkmanship, North Korea is no longer a Stalinist state. The system of omnipresent government control began to fall apart before Kim Il Sung's death in 1994, and the devastating famine of 1996 – 99 dealt the final blow to North Korean Stalinism. Unlike the USSR and China, where the Stalinist systems were dismantled through reforms from above, North Korean Stalinism has actually crumbled under the weight of its own economic inefficiency." Andrei Lankov, "The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism," *Asia Policy*, no. 1 (January 2006): 97, [http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia\\_policy/pdf/ap1-lankov.pdf](http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/pdf/ap1-lankov.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Eberstadt, "The Persistence of North Korea," 29. "Economic Collapse'... as a term to describe *the breakdown of the division of labor in the national economy* – the process through which ordinary people in complex productive societies trade their labor for food."



generation through illicit activities, and millions of dollars worth of illegally transferred financial aid from South Korea.<sup>43</sup> In addition, he held the U.S. “foreign aid lifeline to the DPRK” responsible for the regime’s continued survival.”<sup>44</sup>

Kong Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig explained the authoritarian regime’s survival through effective coercion and control of the population and the elites through its security organizations. According to their assessment, “People are monitored by overlapping military and quasi-military security organizations. ... The two principal domestic intelligence organizations are the Ministry of People’s Security (MPS) and the State Security Department (SSD).”<sup>45</sup> The central objective of the MPS and the SSD is to “permeate every sector of society and to monitor the private and public life of North Korean citizens and foreign visitors.”<sup>46</sup> According to Kong Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, “The greatest threat to the security of the Kim regime would come from a palace coup by top cadres or by the security people... To forestall such a coup in North Korea, Kim Jong Il puts his top people under multiple sources of surveillance.”<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, Kong Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig concluded:

North Koreans are expected to inform on one another, even children on their parents, because if they do not report a crime and it is discovered, they are implicated. A basic principle in North Korea is that two people who trust each other may discuss sensitive issues, but when a third joins them, nothing can be said. Between two people, if one accuses the other of disloyalty, it is one person’s word against the other. With three people, each must fear that the other two may

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<sup>43</sup> Eberstadt, “The Persistence of North Korea,” 32-33. “Unfortunately, we cannot be precise about this, since many of the sources of funds involve illicit transactions. North Korea’s international counterfeiting, drug trafficking, weapons, and weapon technology sales all figure here, although the sums raised from those activities are a matter of some dispute. Nor do we yet know exactly how much of the South Korean taxpayers’ money was furtively channeled from Seoul to Pyongyang during this period. One set of prosecutorial investigations has convicted former President Kim Dae Jung’s national security adviser and several other aides of illegally transferring up to \$500 million to Kim Jong Il’s ‘Bureau 39’ (a unit of the ruling party specially charged with funding Kim’s royal court) on the eve of the historic June 2000 Pyongyang summit. The possibility of other unreported official Seoul-to-Pyongyang payoffs during the 1998 – 2003 period cannot be ruled out — nor, of course, can the potential volume of any such attendant funds be determined.”

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 35, and Table 2. “Ironical though it may seem... Washington’s foreign aid lifeline to the DPRK in recent years looks more significant than any Washington has arranged in recent years for *allies* or *friends*.”

<sup>45</sup> Kong Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 135.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 138.

report the incident and thus each is motivated to report on his own behalf – an example of the prisoner’s dilemma. Hence the near impossibility of organizing any kind of resistance movement against the Kim regime.<sup>48</sup>

Bruce Cumings complemented their assessment by observing that:

Kim Jong Il, like his father, truly trusts only his relatives when it comes to the top security organs. Several top commands responsible for the security of the capital are in the hands of a group of four brothers who are in-laws to Jong Il’s sister, with the eldest brother responsible for the army corps that defends Pyongyang.<sup>49</sup>

Accordingly, it can be ascertained that brinkmanship, state involvement in illicit activities, and the regime’s authoritarian tools undoubtedly share responsibility for the Kim dynasty’s endurance so far.

Subsequently, however, the focus in this analysis is on North Korea’s Juche idea as a major factor in the regime’s survival. The thesis considers how the Pyongyang regime has managed to utilize Juche for its own retention of power. This chapter aims to clarify how Juche — contrary to superficially adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology in Eastern Europe — exercises an apparently holistic power, authority, and penetration of North Korean individual and societal life that is far beyond any experience in the European cases. Consequently, in contrast to the card-house-like collapse of GDR ideology, the argument is that Juche’s structural and emotional effects on the North Korean masses and elites constitute a significant element in the regime’s future survival and will be a major factor upon eventual Korean reunification.

Juche’s *mélange* of Confucian-inspired vision and utopian ideas, pseudo-scientific ideological ingredients derived from Marxism-Leninism, and religious and cultic elements are examined below.<sup>50</sup> The initial section approaches the concept of Juche through the lens of a utopian idea. The concept of utopia, in the sense of a radicalization of dreams and hopes,

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<sup>48</sup> Oh and Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*, 139-140.

<sup>49</sup> Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: New Press, 2004), 169.

<sup>50</sup> It can be viably argued that North Korea’s political reality is far from Communism / Socialism. Instead, Korea scholars and experts describe Juche as an evolution of Socialist ideology, creating the basis for North Korea’s nationalist ideology (some say national religion) of Kimilsungism. Kimilsungism is the North Korean term for Kim Il-sung’s family regime. This term subtly emphasizes its independence and autonomy from Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism, etc. The Juche Idea, as the official state ideology of North Korea, and the political system based on it form a doctrinal component of Kimilsungism. Apart from Juche’s ideological drift and differences from Communism / Socialism, however, North Korea’s political system features all aspects of Stalinist paternalism and suppression to a distinctive extent. For further reference see: Dongsung Kong, “North Korea,” in *The Political Role of the Military: An International Handbook*, ed. Constantine P. Danopoulos and Cynthia Ann Watson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 328; Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 414; and Harrison, *Korean Endgame*, 15.

supports the notion of Juche as an emotionally bonding framework for an individual and collective experience of confidence, faith, and hope. The subsequent section examines Juche's ideological aspirations as an evolution of Marxist-Leninist theory and its resultant scientific claim. A third part explores Juche's religious texture and cultic consecration. The concluding assessment in the final section of this chapter considers whether Juche is a utopian revolutionary idea, a Korea-specific ideological adaptation of socialist theory, or a comprehensively devout state religion of a dynastic cult.

## A. JUCHE — A UTOPIAN REVOLUTIONARY IDEA

In the early sixteenth century, Sir Thomas More first wrote about *Utopia* as an imaginary country of ideal perfection in laws, government, and social conditions.<sup>51</sup> Merriam Webster's Dictionary explains that the word *Utopia* derives from the "Greek *ou* not, no + *topos* place," literally meaning no place or nowhere.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, the British Library maintains that "the almost identical Greek word *eu-topos* means a good place," a witticism on *Utopia*'s "vital question: can a perfect world ever be realised?"<sup>53</sup>

Henri Vogt, in his "Narrative of the Political Transformation in Eastern Europe" presents a complex discussion on Utopian philosophy.<sup>54</sup> His analysis is based on the German philosopher Ernst Bloch (1885-1977) and his main work *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1959).<sup>55</sup> In Vogt's evaluation of the "transformative capacity" of utopias, he utilizes Bloch's essential

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<sup>51</sup> Sir Thomas More (1478 – 1535), canonized in 1935 for his martyrdom. In 2000, Pope John Paul II named St. Thomas More patron of politicians and the governing. As Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII he refused to sanction Henry's divorce of Queen Catherine, his ensuing marriage to Anne Boleyn, and the following secession from the Roman Catholic Church. More was imprisoned, tried and convicted for treason, and eventually decapitated in 1535. His main literary work, "De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia" (*Utopia*, 1516), outlines an ideal human society and constitutes *utopia* as an independent literary and philosophical category. "Plato's *Republic* and the *Laws* provide models for More's reflections on the good citizen and the good state, but More's *Utopia* is significantly different from these models and blends a variety of philosophical influences. In contrast to the Platonic Republic, More's society is a communistic democracy and not an aristocracy with communism confined to the ruling elite." See: Oregon State University, "Sir Thomas More (1478-1535)," <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/philosophers/more.html> (accessed May 11, 2008); also: Thomas More, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

<sup>52</sup> Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. "Utopia," 1379.

<sup>53</sup> The British Library Board, s.v. "Utopia," <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/utopia/utopia.html> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 76 ff.

<sup>55</sup> For the original version see: Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* ([Frankfurt am Main]: Suhrkamp, 1959). For the first American edition see: Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).

differentiation between “abstract utopia” and “concrete utopia.”<sup>56</sup> With reference to Ruth Levitas’s 1997 work on “Educated Hope,” Vogt points out that concrete utopia is “not merely wishful but willful thinking.”<sup>57</sup> Consequently, he infers that “concrete utopia easily assumes a political role whereas an abstract utopia does not.”<sup>58</sup> In conclusion, Vogt offers three key observations on Utopia:

1. Utopia is a real and actual element of any human life.
2. Utopia is transformative – it has the capacity to transform the present with the premises of the future.
3. Many different types, scales and functions of utopias can, and often do, co-exist.<sup>59</sup>

North Korea’s “philosophical mixture of Marxism-Leninism, Maoism, Confucianism and traditional Korean heritage that is Juche,” comprises a similarly concrete utopian vision.<sup>60</sup> According to Paul French, “Juche is seen as the way the nation will move to *chaju* (independence) in a process that is equatable with the Marxist-Leninist notion of socialism as a transitional stage to communism.”<sup>61</sup> Complementary to Maoism and Marxism-Leninism, Juche is advertised as the North Korean variant — the third way. Although exclusively Korean, Juche claims to be a universally adaptable vision for all developing countries on the road to emancipation from imperialism and towards national identity and cohesion. In Kim Jong-il’s view:

The struggle to preserve the Juche character and national character is the struggle against imperialism and dominationism... The imperialist ‘aid’ is a noose of plunder and subjugation aimed at robbing ten and even a hundred things for one thing that is given. The revolutionary parties and peoples must see clearly the miserable situation in the countries and nations which harbored illusions about

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<sup>56</sup> Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 81-82. “The abstract utopia has not really become a reality yet: it is a mere dream; it is not – (yet –) conscious. The concrete utopia, instead, exists in [sic] the horizon of reality: it is a daydream: ‘Konkrete Utopie steht am Horizont jeder Realität’ (Bloch 1959: 258).”

<sup>57</sup> Ruth Levitas, “Educated Hope: Ernst Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia,” in *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, ed. Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 67.

<sup>58</sup> Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 82.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>60</sup> Paul French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula--a Modern History* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

imperialism, must always keep to the anti-imperialist, independent stand determinedly and wipe out even the slightest element of illusions about the imperialists.<sup>62</sup>

Accordingly, Juche has become a fundamental aspect of North Korean identity and self-perception towards an alternative model of socialist development — particularly suitable for third world and other non-aligned states. Juche's embracing of optimism and its collective sense of mission towards a paradisiac future are both naively utopian and highly messianic. According to Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, Juche is the "guiding principle" towards the North Korean paradise:

Here is the North Korean socialist dream: a communal society, blessed with an abundance of goods produced and exchanged without the need for money. These happy people are bound together like a great national tribe, insulated from the economic and political strife of the international community by the fact that the nation is economically self-sufficient. Being productive and self-sufficient, the people are the equal of any nation on the globe, large or small. They envy no one, for they live in an earthly paradise.<sup>63</sup>

In this context, North Korea's real situation of paucity and famine, international isolation, and dependency on foreign aid — from a Juche disciple's view — seems entirely irrelevant. After all, North Korea, guided by Juche, was ultimately the "economically and morally superior system that had the future before it, and they [the North Koreans] saw proof of it every day in the modern society that had taken shape round about them during the last few decades."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Kim Johg-il, "On Preserving the Juche Character and National Character of the Revolution and Construction," (June 19, 1997), 15, <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/111.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> Oh and Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Cornell, *North Korea Under Communism*, 105. "Furthermore, their [North Korean] upbringing included a malicious portrait of other social forms, the accuracy of which they had never questioned."

Analogous to other utopian endeavors, Juche comprises the core utopian concept of a paradise on earth that seems essentially appealing and dear to human beings.<sup>65</sup> Elements of the utopian conception are continuously propagated by the Pyongyang elite. In a 1991 speech to the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Kim Jong Il declared, for example, “Our people take great pride and self-confidence in their just cause; they will work to the end to build an ideal society for mankind in accordance with their own belief and by their own efforts.”<sup>66</sup>

Particularly with regard to Korea’s colonial heritage under Japanese imperialism, it seems reasonable that such a vision would find fertile ground within North Korea’s society. The traumatic experiences and the nearly exhaustive devastation of the Korean War, combined with a deeply rooted anti-American threat perception, appear suitable to have amplified such sentiments. After all, it seems not at all difficult to imagine that such a disillusioned and devastated environment laid the ground for Juche as an “eternal truth” and utopian vision of a North Korean paradise on earth.<sup>67</sup> North Korean defector Kang Chol-hwan recalls the natural and self-evident logic from the average person’s viewpoint: “By marrying our singular Korean genius with the immutable ideals of the Communist revolution, these two masterminds, these two darlings of the universe [Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il], were building for us the Edenic socialist state.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Teuvo Peltoniemi, “Finnish utopian colonies,” [http://www.sosiomedia.fi/utopia/english\\_article.htm](http://www.sosiomedia.fi/utopia/english_article.htm) (accessed May 11, 2008). One example of utopian endeavors to be found in literature are the Finnish Utopian Colonies: “The utopian ventures of Finns are in fact much more closely linked to the world history of utopian communities than is usually realized. Even though, with the possible exception of Sointula, the Finnish undertakings are not mentioned together with More’s Utopia, or with Fourier, Owen, Cabet or Oneida, they still have an honourable [sic] history reaching back to the 18th century. The two best known utopian colonies founded by Finns are Sointula in Canada and Colonia Finlandesa in Argentina. There were, however, almost twenty similar ventures in different parts of the world. ... Finnish nationalism was a prominent feature of these utopian socialist communities. In 1899, nationalist – minded parties seeking refuge from Czarist oppression, planned to establish ‘New Finland’ at Red Deer in Alberta, Canada. ... The question of utopian colonies is not, however, one of moving and travelling as such but one of a spiritual journeying, a restless search for a better world, fit [for] which the actual travel on this earth is but a means to an end.” See: For further details on the Finnish Utopian Colonies see: Peltoniemi, “Finnish Utopian Settlements in North America,” in *Finns in North America*, ed. Michael G. Karni, Olavi Koivukangas and Edward W. Laine (Institute of Migration C9, Turku, 1988), [http://www.sosiomedia.fi/utopia/na\\_settlements.pdf](http://www.sosiomedia.fi/utopia/na_settlements.pdf) (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Kim Jong Il, “For a Free and Peaceful New World.” *Juche* 80, (1991): 4, <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/100.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> Morgan E. Clippinger, “Kim Chong-il in the North Korean Mass Media: A Study of Semi-Esoteric Communication,” *Asian Survey* 21, no. 3 (March 1981): 302, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2643726.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2008). “The sayings of Kim Chong-il [Kim Jong-il] are praised as a kind of eternal truth. Nodong Ch’ongnyon for over a year carried a special column titled ‘The Great Truth, A Guide for Struggle,’ which explained the ‘teachings’ of the Party Center [Party Center is a stylized phrase that refers to Kim Jong – il].”

<sup>68</sup> Kang and Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang*, 2.

Hence, it seems safe to assess that Juche is indeed a utopian revolutionary idea, capable of emotionally appealing to, and mobilizing, the North Korean masses towards the collective utopian aim of a better world — North Korea’s “workers’ paradise.”<sup>69</sup>

## **B. JUCHE — NORTH KOREA’S INDIGENOUS ADAPTATION AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST-LENINIST THEORY**

For the purpose at hand, an adequately detailed working definition holds that “political ideologies are defined as sets of political values held by individuals regarding the fundamental goals of politics.”<sup>70</sup> Merriam Webster’s Dictionary indicates that the term *ideology* has an early nineteenth century French origin, describing the science of ideas (*ideo*– plus *-logie*). It holds that ideology embraces “visionary theorizing;” serves as a “systemic body of concepts,” in particular “about human life or culture,” and “a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture;” and comprises “the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program.”<sup>71</sup> Paul M. Johnson emphasizes how ideology, as “a comprehensive and coherent set of basic beliefs about political, economic, social and cultural affairs,” is utilized for both explaining and prescribing “political strategies and tactics to be pursued.”<sup>72</sup>

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Chinese “political restructuring through reform and improvement of democracy within the Party”<sup>73</sup> — a soft-footed embrace of Capitalism — has left “mass-mobilizing, and ideologically-based” North Korea as the one

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<sup>69</sup> Eli Lehrer, “News From the Workers’ Paradise of North Korea – North Korean leader Kim Jong Il – Brief Article,” *Insight on the News*, (March 1, 1999), [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1571/is\\_8\\_15/ai\\_54007875/print](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1571/is_8_15/ai_54007875/print) (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> Patrick H. O’Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), 61.

<sup>71</sup> Merriam–Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “Ideology,” 616.

<sup>72</sup> Paul M. Johnson, “A Glossary of Political Economy Terms,” (Department of Political Science, Auburn University, 1994-2005), <http://www.auburn.edu/~johnspm/gloss/ideology> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> People’s Daily Online, “Chinese Communist Party undergoes democratic reform to meet challenges,” June 25, 2006, [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/25/eng20060625\\_277173.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200606/25/eng20060625_277173.html) (accessed May 11, 2008). “‘The CPC would push forward China’s political restructuring through reform and improvement of democracy within the Party,’ said Li Junru, vice president of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee.”

remaining, closed authoritarian regime to take Marxism-Leninism seriously.<sup>74</sup> After all, “Of all former and current communist states in the Asian-Pacific area, Vietnam has expressed the clearest commitment to a market economy,” and scores among “the highest GDP growth rates in the region” (8.4% in 2005, and 8.1% in 2006).<sup>75</sup> Since “economic transition has not, so far, induced political transformation,”<sup>76</sup> the Bertelsmann Transformation Atlas (BTA) rated Vietnam’s “Democracy Status” — on a scale from 1 to 10 — at 3.2, on rank number 112, together with China (North Korea holds rank number 120).<sup>77</sup> At the same time, Cuba’s “Democracy Status” of 3.4 put it on rank number 109, behind the United Arab Emirates (rank 108), and in front of Iraq (rank 110).<sup>78</sup> The BTA forecast a “post-Fidel era” development to “de-personalize and re-institutionalize Cuban politics,” which should be instrumental to the “socialist regime’s functional ability” and “for any future prospects of democratization.”<sup>79</sup> Accordingly, “the Communist Party, which Fidel increasingly sidelined as an institution in recent years, has been returned to political centrality.”<sup>80</sup> Overall, under Raúl Castro’s administration, the BTA observed a “change from a highly personalized brand of socialism to a more bureaucratic type of single party rule,” with no indications “for political liberalization or [an] incipient democratization process.”<sup>81</sup>

Accordingly, the ideological framework of the North Korean “Stalinist regime”<sup>82</sup> has received significant scholarly attention. Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig hold that “the North Korean brand of ideology has been inflated beyond what was found even in the heyday of Stalin

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<sup>74</sup> Richard Snyder, “Beyond Electoral Authoritarianism: The Spectrum of Non-Democratic Regimes,” (Department of Political Science, Brown University), 5, [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Political\\_Science/documents/BeyondElectoralAuthor..pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Political_Science/documents/BeyondElectoralAuthor..pdf) (accessed May 11, 2008). Also in: Andreas Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner Publishers, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> Bertelsmann Transformation Atlas 2008 (BTA), “Vietnam, Executive Summary,” <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/atlas.0.html?&L=1> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>76</sup> BTA, “Vietnam, Strategic Outlook.”

<sup>77</sup> BTA, “Vietnam, Democracy Status 3.2.”

<sup>78</sup> BTA, “Cuba, Democracy Status 3.4.”

<sup>79</sup> BTA, “Cuba, Executive Summary.”

<sup>80</sup> BTA, “Cuba, Strategic Outlook.”

<sup>81</sup> BTA. “Cuba, Executive Summary.”

<sup>82</sup> Joel Himelfarb, “Meltdown on North Korea Bush-Condi Approach May Be About to Collapse,” *Accuracy in Media*, April 28, 2008, <http://www.aim.org/guest-column/meltdown-on-north-korea-bush-condi-approach-may-be-about-to-collapse/> (accessed May 11, 2008).



and Mao. Certainly no other country today puts as much effort into the production, elaboration, and dissemination of ideology as does North Korea.”<sup>83</sup> Swedish diplomat Erik Cornell sums up his experience with Pyongyang’s ideological fervor as follows: “It is hard to imagine a more totalitarian state. The entire population was permanently mobilized as soldiers, either with weapons or with working tools.”<sup>84</sup> At the same time, Paul French points out that North Korea’s Juche was “developed as an indigenous revolutionary doctrine fusing the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism with elements of Maoism and Confucianism and traditional Korean systems... partly an adaptation of the ‘universal truth’ of Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Kim Il-sung’s Juche idea embraces fundamental principles in Marxist-Leninist theory. Examples of North Korea’s borrowings are its so-called democratic centralism,<sup>86</sup> the propagated dictatorship of the proletariat,<sup>87</sup> and the regime’s *Songun* (Military First) policy, a variation of the U.S.S.R.’s War Communism.<sup>88</sup> Similar to Soviet-style Socialism, North Korea puts strong emphasis on mass organizations. Akin to Lenin’s metaphor, the “five bodies — the Korean Workers’ Party, Party Youth, the Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Farmers, and the Women’s Union — form the five major ‘transmission belts’ which ensure that the entire population moves

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<sup>83</sup> Oh and Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*, 12.

<sup>84</sup> Cornell, *North Korea Under Communism*, 69.

<sup>85</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 31.

<sup>86</sup> DPRK’s Socialist Constitution, Article 5, [http://www.novexcen.com/dprk\\_constitution\\_98.html](http://www.novexcen.com/dprk_constitution_98.html) (accessed May 11, 2008). “All the State organs in the DPRK are formed and function on the principle of democratic centralism.”

<sup>87</sup> DPRK’s Socialist Constitution, Article 12. “The State shall adhere to the class line, strengthen the dictatorship of people’s democracy and firmly defend the people’s power and socialist system against all subversive acts of hostile elements at home and abroad.”

<sup>88</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 33. Songun is North Korea’s *Military First* policy, which prioritizes the Korean People’s Army in all affairs of state and allocates national resources to the army first. The policy embraces *Military First Politics*, *Military First Economy*, and *Military First Ideology*. Soviet style War Communism, on the other hand, “dictated the subordination of all industry and economic distribution to the state, complete nationalization, and the introduction of a rationing system to handle supply and distribution; pricing and money circulation were also dealt with at the highest state level.”

in accordance with the leaders' will.”<sup>89</sup> While supporting the view that elements of Juche are traceable to Soviet-style Socialism, French simultaneously underscores its homespun North Korean character: “Juche was also an assertion of the DPRK’s independence from the USSR after Pyongyang’s refusal to join Comecon.”<sup>90</sup>

Accordingly, the preface of the 1998 North Korean constitution affirms that “The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a socialist fatherland of Juche which embodies the idea of and guidance by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.” Moreover, Article 3 states that “The DPRK is guided in its activities by the Juche idea, a world outlook centered on people, a revolutionary ideology for achieving the independence of the masses of people.”<sup>91</sup>

In contrast to Marxist dialectical materialism, however, Kim Il-sung’s Juche idea insists that the Capitalist development stage could be skipped completely. The North Korean economy and society would move directly from a colonial system of feudal tenure to socialist collectivism. Thus, Juche constitutes a specific employment of Marxism-Leninism, particularly adapted “to Korean reality, a country that had not experienced a capitalist period but that had existed as a colony and then been destroyed in the Korean War.”<sup>92</sup> French concludes that Kim Il Sung never regarded his tailored version of Marxism-Leninism as revisionism, but “rather as an adaption to North Korean reality... while Soviet Marxists saw Kim’s reinterpretation of Marxism — Leninism as outright heresy.”<sup>93</sup> North Korea scholar Bruce Cumings explains the development of “Korean communism” as a result of the “political vacuum in Marxism-Leninism” which

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<sup>89</sup> Andrei Lankov, *North of the DMZ: Essays on Daily Life in North Korea* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2007), 200. According to Lenin’s metaphor, “the very best motors and first-class machines, will be forced to remain idle if the transmission belts from the motors to the machines are damaged, so our work of socialist construction must meet with inevitable disaster if the trade unions – the transmission belts from the Communist Party to the masses – are badly fitted or function badly. It is not sufficient to explain, to reiterate and corroborate this truth; it must be backed up organisationally by the whole structure of the trade unions and by their everyday activities.” Also, V. I. Lenin, “Role and Functions of the Trade Unions Under The New Economic Policy,” (Decision of the C.C., R.C.P.(B.), January 12, 1922), <http://amadlandawonye.wikispaces.com/1921.+Lenin.+Role+and+Function+of+TUs+under+the+NEP> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>90</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 31.

<sup>91</sup> Amended and supplemented socialist constitution of the DPRK, adopted on Sept. 5, 1998 by the first session of the 1<sup>st</sup> Supreme People’s Assembly. See: DPRK’s Socialist Constitution (Full Text), *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, SUPREME PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY*, [http://www.novexcn.com/dprk\\_constitution\\_98.html](http://www.novexcn.com/dprk_constitution_98.html) (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 33.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

“opens the way to an assertion of indigenous politics.”<sup>94</sup> At the same time, Paul French notes, “What set Kim apart from most other leaders of socialist bloc countries was his fiercely independent streak, which to a degree accounted for North Korea’s perceived diplomatic arrogance and led to the creation and elevation of Juche as the dominant creed of DPRK life.”<sup>95</sup>

Consequently, in the late 1970s, secluded from Soviet “Real Existing Socialism” and China’s post-Mao democratic reforms, North Korea started cultivating its universalist Juche claim: “The Juche idea, our Party’s outlook on the world, is the guiding idea of our times which illuminates the absolutely correct way of achieving independence for the popular masses. It is the banner of the revolutionary people’s cause of independence and the banner of Socialism.”<sup>96</sup> Juche’s universal aspiration was observed by Swedish diplomat Eric Cornell during his tenure in Pyongyang: “The self-assumed role of lead state in the struggle against imperialism provided the foundations for a self-righteousness that demanded unswerving loyalty from all ‘progressive’ forces.”<sup>97</sup> Paul French similarly asserts that Juche “represented Kim Il-sung’s bid to be recognized as a prominent — indeed, the pre-eminent — ideological figure in the communist world.”<sup>98</sup>

Under Kim Jong-il’s aegis — according to an official publication — “in order to stimulate solidarity with anti-imperialist forces,” and to expand and develop the “non-aligned movement,” North Korea initiated the “study and dissemination of the Juche idea on a global

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<sup>94</sup> Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country*, 408. Cumings offers a noteworthy analysis in this regard: “Karl Marx had no political model for a future socialist state, only a highly opaque set of prescriptions... It was Lenin who turned Marxism into a political theory and, some argue, transformed it into a voluntaristic doctrine that left open the possibility of the extreme statism of Stalin, in which politics from on high became the agency for engineering an entire economy and society. But the political vacuum in Marxism-Leninism also opens the way to an assertion of indigenous politics; this may even be demanded by the very paucity of political models; in any case we see it in Russian, Chinese, and (perhaps more strongly) Korean communism.”

<sup>95</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 56.

<sup>96</sup> Kim Jong Il, “On Having a Correct Viewpoint and Understanding of the Juche Philosophy,” (talk to the senior officials of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 25, 1990), <http://www.kcckp.net/en/tourism/attraction/attract-view.php?2+0>. (accessed May 11, 2008), 6.

<sup>97</sup> Cornell, *North Korea Under Communism*, 71.

<sup>98</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 31.

scale.”<sup>99</sup> Simultaneously, Kim Jong-il developed his concept of the Juche era and its “revolutionary practice... to create a new independent world.”<sup>100</sup> With the continuing dilution of Soviet Socialism, and China’s opening to reforms, the North Korean regime seemed destined to become the world’s vanguard of Socialism.

Indeed, it can be assessed that the North Korean emphasis on Juche’s ideological roots in Marxism-Leninism is an essential strategy to bolster its legitimacy and authority. Though Pyongyang portrays the Juche idea as North Korea’s indigenous adaptation, the regime arrogates to itself to the same claim of the legitimate authority of a universal and scientific political theory that is inherent to Marxism-Leninism. Simultaneously, Kim Il-sung’s cultivation of the role as North Korea’s great revolutionary leader bestowed ideological authority and political legitimacy — on a par with Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao — upon himself, and eventually upon Kim Jong-il as his dynastic successor.<sup>101</sup>

### C. JUCHE – STATE RELIGION AND DEVOUT DYNASTIC CULT

The 2008 *CIA World Factbook* describes North Korea’s religious background as “traditionally Buddhist and Confucianist, some Christian and syncretic Chondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way).” The same source adds the following note: “autonomous religious activities now almost nonexistent; government-sponsored religious groups exist to provide illusion of religious freedom.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> “Kim Jong Il: Brief History,” *Foreign Languages Publishing House*, Pyongyang, Korea, Juche 87 (1998), 77-78. “In the major regions of the world, progressive organizations and figures from press circles inaugurated committees for the translation and publication of the works of Comrade Kim Il Sung, translating and publishing great volumes of work annually. In the period from January to October, 1980, Comrade Kim Il Sung’s works were published in 50 languages with a circulation of 24.43 million copies, and carried in more than 1,000 newspapers and magazines in 124 countries. So, the ranks of followers of the Juche idea increased rapidly, resulting in the formation of the Juche idea study organizations in nearly all countries of the world with memberships of political figures, people from academic and press circles, fighters of resistance armies, youth and students as well as high-ranking party and government officials.”

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>101</sup> Kim Jong Il, “Let Us Advance Under The Banner Of Marxism-Leninism And The Juche Idea,” (on the occasion of the 165<sup>th</sup> birthday of Karl Marx and the centenary of his death, May 3, 1983), <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/206.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2008), 8-9. “In the course of leading the Korean revolution the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung gave scientific answers to all problems arising in the revolution and construction on the basis of the Juche idea and systematized the Juche ideology, theory and method in an all-round way. All his ideology, theory and method proceed from the Juche principles and embody them. In this sense we call Comrade Kim Il Sung’s ideology, theory and method the Juche idea.”

<sup>102</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The CIA World Fact Book 2008* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2008), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html> (accessed May 11, 2008). Remarkably, this source does not mention – or provide any information about – Juche at all.

Following a basic definition of a religion, three essential elements are beliefs, rituals, and ethics. The respective system of religious belief in a divine being (“superhuman or spiritual”), however, as the overarching reference to determine its rituals and ethics, is regarded as the most important attribute of a religion. At the same time, the religion’s theology — its narrative, its teachings, and its doctrine — provide linkage and guidance for the religious beliefs. “A religion's theology is its handbook of beliefs .... Theology is important because it puts a religion's beliefs in an order that people can understand.”<sup>103</sup>

In the case of North Korea, the overarching and holistic approach of applied Juche satisfies all three essential religious requirements: (1) belief in and divine deification of the Great Leader and the Dear Leader; (2) enshrined rituals and behavior patterns concerning the veneration of these two leaders; and (3) a moral and ethical code, provided by the two Kims’ writings, teachings, and “on-the-spot guidance.”<sup>104</sup>

With North Korea’s 1998 revised constitution, the late Great Leader Kim Il-sung, four years after his death, was anointed “eternal President of the Republic.”<sup>105</sup> Thus, Pyongyang’s Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) effectively declared North Koreans the “disciple[s] of the world's only non-living president.”<sup>106</sup> At the same time, the SPA accorded Kim Il-sung’s son, Kim Jong-il, the nation’s “highest administrative authority” as Chairman of the National Defense

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<sup>103</sup> “Getting to Know the Basics of World Religion,” <http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/id-974,subcat-RELIGION.html?print=true> (accessed May 11, 2008). Adapted from Marc Gellman and Thomas Hartman, *Religion for Dummies* (New York: Wiley Pub., 2002). For a more detailed reflection on defining characteristics of religion see Austin Cline, “What is Religion? Defining the Characteristics of Religion,” About.com: *Agnosticism/Atheism*, <http://atheism.about.com/od/religiondefinition/p/WhatReligion.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008)

<sup>104</sup> Oh and Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*, 4. “Despite having limited formal education, Kim also took on the Confucian role of great teacher, dispensing wisdom on any and all subjects as he visited the countryside on his famous on-the-spot guidance tours. As the cult of the ruler was augmented by North Korean propagandists, Kim became transformed from a brave guerilla fighter attached to the Chinese and Soviet armies to a supernatural being who could even command the weather and transcend time and space.”

<sup>105</sup> DPRK’s Socialist Constitution (Full Text). “The DPRK and the entire Korean people will uphold the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as the eternal President of the Republic, defend and carry forward his ideas and exploits and complete the Juche revolution under the leadership of the Workers’ Party of Korea. The DPRK Socialist Constitution is a Kim Il Sung constitution which legally embodies Comrade Kim Il Sung’s Juche state construction ideology and achievements.” See: Preface of the amended and supplemented socialist constitution of the DPRK, adopted on 5 September 1998 by the first session of the 1<sup>st</sup> Supreme People’s Assembly.

<sup>106</sup> “Comeback Kim,” *Indian Express Newspapers*, Bombay, September 11, 1998, <http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/ple/ie/daily/19980911/25450884.html> (accessed May 11, 2008).

Commission.<sup>107</sup> An association with the Christian God in heaven and his son Jesus Christ, sent earthwards to bless man with salvation, literally seems to obtrude itself and is probably not at all accidental. In the wake of Kim Il-sung's death — some sources report — all over North Korea, 3,500 “towers of eternal life” have been erected. Since then, Pyongyang allegedly has spent “\$530 million to erect various monuments” and an estimated total of “at least \$890 million annually to stage personality cult campaigns.”<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, Kim Jong-il's proclamation of the “Juche Era,”<sup>109</sup> decreed after his father's death, might evoke amusement in traditional Western minds. Such amusement, however, misses the point that the traditional Christian era of Anno Domini (A.D.) — in the year of the Lord — has come to an end in North Korea. Instead, April 15, 1912 marks North Korea's indigenous modification of Anno Domini: the year of the Lord Kim Il-sung. Today, North Korean computation of time and date is based on the eternal President's birthday.

Accordingly, April 15 is the highest public holiday in North Korea, and “two of the four national holidays are the birthdays of Kim Il-song [Kim Il-sung] and Kim Chong-il [Kim Jong-il].”<sup>110</sup> The elder Kim's birthday is commemorated as the “Day of the Sun.”<sup>111</sup> “On such days, candy was dispensed to all the kids in the country, sometimes even to those in the camps,”

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<sup>107</sup> CIA, *The CIA World Fact Book 2000* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2000), <http://www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact2000/geos/kn.html> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>108</sup> “The Real Picture of Human Rights in North Korea,” *Korean War Educator*, International Human Rights League of Korea, 2008, [http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/korea\\_today/p\\_korea\\_today\\_human\\_rights.htm](http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/korea_today/p_korea_today_human_rights.htm). (accessed May 11, 2008). “After the death of Kim Il-sung in July 1994, they began to construct the ‘towers of eternal life.’ Now they say they have constructed these towers in all villages in North Korea. The main ‘Tower of Eternal Life’ was erected in 1997 in the precinct of Kim Il-sung's mausoleum, namely the Kumsusan Palace in Pyongyang. The 92.52-meter-tall [303.54 ft.] tower stands there overlooking the 17,000 sq. meter [6.56 sq. miles] precinct.”

<sup>109</sup> Kim, “An Analysis Of Religious Forms,” 128. “North Korea has developed *juche* ideology into a sort of worldview or personal view of life, and designated the birthplace of Kim Il Sung as sacred grounds. On the third anniversary of Kim Il Sung's death North Korea proclaimed the so-called ‘Juche Era’ which counts the year of 1912, the birth year of Kim Il Sung, as the first year, and enacted April 15, the birth day of Kim Il Sung, as the Day of the Sun.”

<sup>110</sup> Helen-Louise Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 19.

<sup>111</sup> Voice of America, “VOA: North Korea Celebrates Birthday Of Late National Founder,” *U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News*, April 15, 2006, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 9, 2008). “State media reports say North Koreans attended government-sponsored events Saturday to commemorate the ‘Day of the Sun.’ Kim Il Sung died in 1994 but maintains a cult following and is considered the country's ‘eternal president.’ He was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong Il, who enjoys the same revered status in North Korea as his late father.”



remembers Kang Chol-Hwan, former penal camp inmate and later North Korean defector to South Korea.<sup>112</sup> Likewise, Helen-Louise Hunter relates:

North Koreans celebrate Kim's birthday with extra food rations and new clothes, given out once a year on Kim's birthday to reinforce the idea, taught in nursery school, that Kim is the source of all material, as well as spiritual, gifts to the people. The children sing songs of praise on receiving their new school uniforms.<sup>113</sup>

Analogies to the Christian Christmas tradition of giving gifts to loved ones, donating to the needy, and singing Christmas carols again seem evident and might not be unintended. Kang Chol-Hwan, who later spent a decade of his youth growing up in a North Korean concentration camp, recalled his childhood memories accordingly:

To the child I was, Kim Il-sung was a kind of Father Christmas. Every year on his birthday, he would send us gift packages of cakes and sweets. Our beloved Number One chose them himself, with a care and kindness that gave his gifts a savoriness all their own. Thanks to his generosity, we also had the right, every third year, to a school uniform, a cap, and a pair of shoes. ... All during my childhood, Kim Il-sung had been like a god to me.<sup>114</sup>

Likewise, Pyongyang's official statements employed similarly pompous and messianic vocabulary as a rhetorical device. In March 2008, for example, North Korea's official homepage maintained that "The Leaders are the sun of the nation and mankind." However, in May 2008, on a modified D.P.R.K. webpage, the URL was no longer active.<sup>115</sup> In the same way, the Pyongyang-controlled Korea News Service in Japan reported on "the anti-U.S., anti-fascist movement for national salvation with the Juche-based strategy and tactics."<sup>116</sup> Likewise, an

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<sup>112</sup> Kang and Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang*, 133.

<sup>113</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 19.

<sup>114</sup> Kang and Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang*, 1, 136.

<sup>115</sup> In March 2008 the cited quotation, describing the "Leaders" of the DPRK, was found under <<http://www.korea-dpr.com/pmenu.htm>>. In May 2008 this URL was no longer active. A modified "DPR Korea, Official Webpage" no longer utilizes such ornate language to portray the DPRK leaders. However, "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung's Autobiography – an epic work of 24 Chapters and 2161 pages – is still available as a 7.22MB PDF version (see <<http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/202.pdf>>). In comparison, the 1982 "new King James version" of the Holy Bible, "containing the Old and New Testaments" comprises 1236 pages (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version, Containing the Old and New Testaments*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1982). In contrast, "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-il's "Brief History" contains a mere 160 pages (see <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/103.pdf> for the PDF document).

<sup>116</sup> "Statement of spokesman for Japan mission of NDFS," *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, August 27, 1999, Juche 88, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/1999/9908/news08/27.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008).

ordinary KCNA (Korean Central News Agency) press release reported about “Seminars on the immortal exploits of General Secretary Kim Jong Il [which] were held in Russia, Nepal, Mongolia and Peru from Feb. 12 to 15 on the occasion of his birthday,” accompanied by exhibitions “showing his [Kim Jong-il’s] immortal Songun leadership exploits.”<sup>117</sup> In the same way, a KCNA report conveyed a message of worldwide relevance and acceptance by giving the impression that government officials in Austria devotedly observed February 16 and the “Day of the Sun,” and “highly praised Kim Jong Il for the leadership exploits he has performed by turning the DPRK into an ideological and military power under the uplifted banner of Songun.”<sup>118</sup> Overall more than 1,200 honorific titles are officially sanctioned to revere Kim Jong-il, “The Lodestar of the Twenty-first Century,” according to Paul French.<sup>119</sup>

The daily veneration of the Kims’ teachings and writings extends to a remarkable dimension. “The average man’s work day is extended by three or four hours and the average woman’s work day by two to three hours for political study.”<sup>120</sup> Such “political study” is tantamount to Juche study and is usually performed within one’s “unit...the basic social grouping of North Korean society.”<sup>121</sup> In light of an eight hour work day, six days a week, these examples illustrate the “exorbitant amount of time involved in the perpetuation of the cult.”<sup>122</sup> In fact, it can be assessed that the social grouping into units constitutes a fundamental factor in the state’s Juche indoctrination and its utmost Orwellian penetration of society.

Such descriptions might resonate with recollections of grandparents who grew up in a deeply religious age and/or rural society, and who, in their youth, experienced a demanding

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<sup>117</sup> “Seminars on Exploits of Kim Jong Il Held,” *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, March 1, 2008, Juche 97, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>118</sup> “February Holiday Celebrated,” *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, March 1, 2008, Juche 97, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>119</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 67. “... in 1997 the North Koreans took a full-page advert in the New York Times to celebrate the rise to power of Kim Jong Il, describing him as ‘The Lodestar of the Twenty-first Century’.”

<sup>120</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 33.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 37. “It [the unit] can be the school one attends; the factory, collective farm, or government office where one works; or the military unit to which one is attached.”

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.



focus on “Ora et Labora” (prayer and work).<sup>123</sup> In comparison, not unusually, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’ Catholic societies, an early morning matins would start, and an evening vesper service would finish, an eight to ten hour work day — six days a week. Although matins and vesper services take only fifteen to twenty minutes, in contrast with two to four hours of daily Juche study, the resulting dedication to Catholic beliefs and virtues can be regarded as quite significant. One can only imagine the effect of much lengthier daily sessions devoted to Juche study.

Referring to Kim Il-sung’s on-the-spot guidance micro-management trips of inspection throughout the country, Helen-Louise Hunter reported as follows:<sup>124</sup> “Kim’s words of instruction on these inspection trips were usually printed in bold-face print or darker print, much like Jesus’ words in some editions of the Bible. He was the only person ever directly quoted in North Korea.”<sup>125</sup>

Surprisingly, Hunter observed, “While they [North Koreans] can — and do — renounce the cult intellectually, expressing abhorrence at its excesses, they retain an almost religious feeling toward Kim [Il-sung] as a semi-god for the North Korean people.”<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Benedictine Sisters Transfiguration Monastery, “Our Benedictine Vows,” (Emmaus, PA), <http://www.emmausosb.org/vows.html> (accessed May 11, 2008). “Ora et Labora” (“Prayer and Work”) is the motto of the The Order of Saint Benedict. According to the Rule of St Benedict (ch. 58.17), “Benedictine monastics promise vows of *stability*, *conversion* through the monastic way of life (*conversatio*) and *obedience* ... *Stability* is a lifelong commitment to the monastic way of life in a particular community. ... A disciplined life in a stable community, all committed to seeking God provides the setting for pursuing a radical conversion to the reign of God known as *conversion* to the monastic way of life ... Obedience is expressed by listening and responding to God's daily self-revelation, by participating in monastic authority, by joining the prioress and community members in prayerful reflection and decision making, and by acceptance of the authority vested in the prioress by the Rule of Benedict.”

<sup>124</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 13. Kim Il Sung’s “personal style of leadership ... combined with his penchant for on-the-spot guidance, allowed him to become personally familiar with virtually every town and village, every factory and farm, in North Korea. Over the years, most North Koreans saw Kim at close hand on one or another of his routine visits to their provinces. Kim is reported to have spent an average of from ten to fifteen days each year in each of North Korea’s fifteen provinces, making a total of from 150 to 225 days a year outside Pyongyang. He is said to have traveled more than 318,000 miles in thirty years, from 1950 to 1980, averaging approximately 32 miles a day.”

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Another example of the propagated divine nature of the Kim dynasty is the frequent reference to the mythology-laden, ancient holy grounds of Mount Paektu, as Kim Il-sung's revolutionary stronghold and the alleged birthplace of his son and successor.<sup>127</sup> An official D.P.R.K. internet publication declares:

On February 16, Juche 31 (1942), Kim Jong Il was born in the log cabin under the blessing of the whole nation. His birth was a bright sunrise promising the completion of the revolutionary cause of Juche started by President Kim Il Sung, the glory of Korea and a source of greatest joy to the Korean people.<sup>128</sup>

In a Korean Central News Agency press release a Cuban embassy official is allegedly quoted after a North Korean government-sponsored visit to Mount Paektu: "Mt. Paektu fully shows the greatness, spirit and grit of Kim Il Sung, a great man born of heaven, and Marshal Kim Jong Il, the son of Mt. Paektu."<sup>129</sup> Paul French gives a summary of the myth surrounding Kim Jong-il's fabricated birth on Mount Paektu:

Kim [Jong-il] was reputedly born on Mount Paektu, traditionally Korea's highest and most sacred mountain, where legend has it that Korea came into existence 5,000 years ago. As he came into the world a new star appeared in the sky, a double rainbow appeared, an iceberg on a nearby lake cracked, strange lights filled the sky and a swallow passed by overhead to pass on to the world the news of his birth.<sup>130</sup>

Western scholars, however, maintain unanimously that Kim Jong-il was almost certainly born on February 16, 1942 in Siberia, where the Kim family had found refuge from Japanese

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<sup>127</sup> "Kim Jong Il's native home in the Mt. Paektu secret camp," *Naenara, Korea Computer Center in DPR Korea*, <http://www.kcckp.net/en/tourism/attraction/attract-view.php?2+0>. (accessed May 11, 2008). "According to North Korean propagandists, Kim Jong Il was born in a log cabin on Mount Paekdu, the legendary birthplace of Tangun, the mythic father of the Korean people." Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, 346. "It [Mount Paektu] is the sacred mountain and the holy place of the Korean nation for its association with the revolutionary history of President Kim Il Sung and for its honour [sic] as being the birthplace of leader Kim Jong Il."

<sup>128</sup> "Kim Jong Il's native home in the Mt. Paektu secret camp," *Naenara, Korea Computer Center in DPR Korea*.

<sup>129</sup> "Military attaches corps visits Mt. Paektu area," *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, August 27 1999, Juche 88, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/1999/9908/news08/27.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>130</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 57.

persecution.<sup>131</sup> Kong Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig conclude that the creative fabrication around Kim Jong-il's mythical birth on the "'sacred' Mount Paektu provides the illusion that he is a gift to the Korean people from heaven."<sup>132</sup>

Again, resemblances to Judeo Christian religious belief seem ostentatious. Indeed, the North Korean Mount Paektu folklore around the Kim family deeply resonates with biblical themes: "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." (Matthew 2:11). However, the Bible's modest description of the Israelites' Exodus, and their leader Moses receiving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, combined with elements of the Christian nativity gospel and the Star of Bethlehem seem to pale next to the fanciful and pompous hodgepodge of the Kim dynasty's Mount Paektu saga.

At the same time, the patriarchic leader's Mandate of Heaven is a traditional Confucian concept which widely resonates with legitimacy. Pyongyang's religious ideology holds that North Korea's ultimate salvation will arrive after Kim Jong-il and Juche bring about the eventual defeat of their enemies: the United States, South Korea, and Japan. The ensuing spread of Juche across the world — in the North Korean view — will mark the subsequent arrival of paradise on earth.<sup>133</sup> By substituting a few nouns, such a message can probably resonate with the doctrines of various religions.

In the meantime, Juche's religious prominence seems to receive more and more concerned recognition. A 2006 publication of Voice Of Martyrs (VOM), an Oklahoma-based evangelical organization — covertly proselytizing in North Korea — subtly acknowledges Juche's religious status by labeling it "a false trinity consisting of Kim Il Sung, the ... 'father;' Kim Jong Il, the ... 'son;' and the 'holy fire' of Juche ideology."<sup>134</sup> Michigan State University's Asian Studies Center arrives at a similar conclusion, stating that "Juche and the veneration of the

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<sup>131</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 57.

<sup>132</sup> Oh and Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*, 120.

<sup>133</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 49.

<sup>134</sup> Todd P. Nettleton, "They All Went Back." *VOM, The Voice of the Martyrs, Newsletter*, October 2006, [http://webdirect604.com/VOMSO/PDF/VOM\\_Oct\\_Newsletter\\_NKArticle.pdf](http://webdirect604.com/VOMSO/PDF/VOM_Oct_Newsletter_NKArticle.pdf) (accessed May 11, 2008). VOM - The Voice of the Martyrs "is a non-profit, interdenominational organization with a vision for aiding Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ, fulfilling the Great Commission, and educating the world about the ongoing persecution of Christians. VOM is headquartered in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, with thirty affiliated international offices, and an enormous team of servant-hearted volunteers."

two ‘Leaders’ is a religious phenomenon.”<sup>135</sup> Of similar significance is the earlier discussed reference to Juche, as the world’s number ten religion, published by Adherents.com:<sup>136</sup>

It is true that Juche has only a nominal presence outside of North Korea. But it has **so many** adherents, is so influential in their lives, and is so different from any other religious system, that including it on this list may be necessary in order to accurately reflect the total world religious economy. As with the other religions listed here, inclusion on this list does not constitute endorsement, merely recognition of Juche as a statistically significant distinct religion. ... While we recognize there may be validity in continued classification of Juche as a highly "heretical" subset of Communism or general secularism, it seems that, on balance, to do so today is no more accurate than continuing to classify Buddhism as a Hindu sect.<sup>137</sup>

At the same time, David Henke — the Watchman Fellowship’s Founder and Chairman of the Board<sup>138</sup> — in an essay on “The use of Mind Control in Religious Cults,” concludes that the North Korean regime’s ideology amounts to “religious cultism.”<sup>139</sup> Similarly, Christopher M. Centner, a senior intelligence analyst with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), has observed that, “When compared to the attributes of a cult, North Korea slides easily into the definition.”<sup>140</sup> By means of a nine point checklist, derived from theological characteristics and commonly

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<sup>135</sup> “North Korean Religion,” *Windows on Asia*, (Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University), <http://asia.msu.edu/eastasia/NorthKorea/religion.html> (accessed May 11, 2008)

<sup>136</sup> Adherents.com, “Major Religions of the World.”

<sup>137</sup> Adherents.com, “Discussion of why Juche is classified as a major world religion,” <http://www.adherents.com/largecom/Juche.html> (accessed May 12, 2008), (“so many” in bold print in the original for emphasis).

<sup>138</sup> David Henke, “The Watchman Fellowship,” [http://www.watchman.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.bio\\_dhenke](http://www.watchman.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.bio_dhenke) (accessed May 11, 2008). “David Henke founded Watchman Fellowship in 1979. He chose to pursue this ministry full time in 1978, leaving his previous career as an educator. David shaped the missionary philosophy and methodology of Watchman Fellowship through its first sixteen years as its President. He now guides and oversees it as the Board Chairman. Rev. Henke specializes in the field of Jehova’s Witnesses and issues of mind control, spiritual abuse, and legalism. His heart is tender toward those who continue to suffer from the effects of being in bondage to false spiritual systems. Working with these individuals and groups is one of David’s passions.” “Watchman Fellowship is an independent Christian research and apologetics ministry focusing on new religious movements, cults, the occult and the New Age... Watchman Fellowship serves the Christian and secular community as a resource for education, counseling, and non-coercive intervention and evangelism training. We accomplish these tasks through our church presentations, our magazines (The Watchman Expositor and The Vantage Point), personal counseling, this website, and other activities. We have served almost every denomination including Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Assemblies of God, Church of God, Lutheran, Nazarene, etc., as well as schools, law enforcement agencies, and civic groups.”

<sup>139</sup> Henke, “The use of Mind Control in Religious Cults (Part Two),” <http://www.watchman.org/cults/usemindcontrol2.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>140</sup> Christopher M. Centner, “The Cult That Is North Korea,” *Cultic Studies Review* 1, no. 3 (2002), [http://www.culticstudiesreview.org/csr\\_member/mem\\_articles/centner\\_christopher\\_csr0103.htm](http://www.culticstudiesreview.org/csr_member/mem_articles/centner_christopher_csr0103.htm) (accessed May 11, 2008).

utilized to analyze cultic organizations, Centner deduces that “Juche and the worship of Kim Jong-Il match almost perfectly with those attributes expected to be found in a cult.” However, due to “Pyongyang’s fundamentally hostile worldview and its fanatical, resolutely uncompromising Kim-focus doctrine,” Centner further assesses that “North Korea matches the pattern of the most violent cults.”<sup>141</sup> Former CIA analyst Helen-Louise Hunter, in her 1999 sociological study on North Korea, arrived at a similarly meaningful conclusion: “the Kim cult may prove to be one of the most remarkable cults of all time.”<sup>142</sup>

Paul French, however, connects the personality cult to the Juche ideology: “Although other major personality cults in the socialist world have been similar to that in North Korea, arguably none has been so total and complete as in the DPRK, or has had such blatant theoretical justifications as those enshrined in Juche.”<sup>143</sup> Australian Korea scholar Andrei Lankov concurs and points out that “the decision to introduce the Juche Era was just one of several manifestations of Kim Il Sung’s posthumous ‘personality cult.’”<sup>144</sup>

The extreme scope of the cult is explained by the “state’s total control of the media — everything from the mass rallies held to mark anniversaries of one of the Kims’ birth or the Great Leader’s death to popular songs that extol the Kims.”<sup>145</sup> On the other hand, the cult’s deep penetration is achieved by “extend[ing] the cult into the private realm.”<sup>146</sup>

Paul French condenses the argument: “The first decades of the existence of the DPRK saw Kim Il-sung’s personality cult grow, first to secure power, then to motivate the population, and finally to dominate the country. The cult was then effectively enshrined in Juche.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Centner, “The Cult That Is North Korea.” For a detailed summary of social-structural, social-psychological, and interpersonal behavioral patterns as an “analytical tool” to assess a cultic environment, see: Janja Lalich and Michael D. Langone, “Characteristics Associated with Cultic Groups – Revised,” [http://www.csj.org/infoserv\\_cult101/checklis.htm](http://www.csj.org/infoserv_cult101/checklis.htm) (accessed May 11, 2008).

<sup>142</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 24.

<sup>143</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 48.

<sup>144</sup> Lankov, *North of the DMZ*, 10.

<sup>145</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 67.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. “The universal lapel badges, worn next to the heart, and the portraits of the Kims that hang in every household to show that the Great Leader and the Dear Leader effectively watch over every family in the land, extend the cult into the private realm.”

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 49.

#### **D. CONCLUSION: JUCHE – A FUNDAMENTALIST STATE BELIEF-SYSTEM**

This examination of North Korea's Juche idea strongly suggests that it holds distinctive elements of utopian, ideological, and religious paradigms. Though today's conception of modern secular states separates religion from political ideology, a 2007 textbook on comparative politics observes that "ideologies and religions are in many ways similar, with their assertions about the fundamental nature of humans and society, the key to a good life and an ideal community, a host of core texts and prophets, and a promise of salvation."<sup>148</sup>

Juche's utopian appeal of a "collective impulse towards a better place,"<sup>149</sup> its all-embracing set of ideological "political values" concerning the "fundamental goals of politics,"<sup>150</sup> and its religious culture of deifying its leaders and of practicing their moral codes, all qualify the Juche idea as a utopian and comprehensively religious and ideological framework.

Accordingly, since North Korea's religious and political leadership is fused into a single sovereign authority under the umbrella of Juche, the conclusion seems warranted that the Kim dynasty fits the definition of a theocracy — the "rule by God,' where the officially sanctioned faith is the foundation for the entire political regime."<sup>151</sup>

Moreover, the evidence examined so far suggests that Juche is not merely a utopian ideological state religion. Indeed, the North Korean Juche idea involves "the fusion of religion and politics into an ideology that seeks to merge religion and the state."<sup>152</sup> In fact, Juche appears to fit the textbook definition of Fundamentalism.

According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary, Fundamentalism derives from "a movement in 20<sup>th</sup> century Protestantism emphasizing the literally interpreted Bible as fundamental to

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<sup>148</sup> O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 65.

<sup>149</sup> Lucy Sargisson, "Religious fundamentalism and utopianism in the 21st century," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12, no. 3 (October 1, 2007): 272, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 9, 2008).

<sup>150</sup> O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 62. "Political Ideologies Are... Sets of political values regarding the fundamental goals of politics..."

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>152</sup> O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 128. "... fundamentalism, which we defined as the fusion of religion and politics into an ideology that seeks to merge religion and the state." Also, *Ibid.*, 68. "... fundamentalism can be viewed as an ideology that seeks to unite religion with the state, or rather, to make faith the sovereign authority."

Christian life and teaching.” Fundamentalism describes “the beliefs of this movement... [or] adherence to such beliefs... [or] a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles.”<sup>153</sup>

Similarly, British scholar Lucy Sargisson, in her 2007 work on *Religious Fundamentalism and Utopianism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, found that:

The key that helps us to unravel all of the [sic] lies in the [respective religious] group’s attitudes to its core beliefs. All of the scholarship in this field points towards this. The key factor in identifying fundamentalism is the core – the fundamentals, which are perceived to be in danger... This core is found in a pure and inerrant sacred text (usually this is a written text but sometimes it consists of a collection of stories or utterances by / about a sacred person or divinity...).<sup>154</sup>

Sargisson further described a fundamentalist group’s opposition to individualism in favor of collectivism, and the need for “doctrinal discipline...fundamentalist dogmatism,” a “strong internal hierarchy,” and “codes of behavior.”<sup>155</sup> As a “key defining feature of fundamentalism,” she identified its claim for “absolute rightness” and “righteousness.”<sup>156</sup> While Lucy Sargisson utilized Osama bin Laden’s jihad to illustrate the characteristics of Fundamentalism, existing parallels to North Korea’s Juche idea are stunning. With a worldview similar in this respect to that of Muslim Fundamentalists, North Korea perceives external threats “to the core of its belief system.”<sup>157</sup> At the same time, Juche — through its indigenous strain of Communism, enriched with traditional Confucian elements — “seek[s] also to revive, re-imagine or conserve an existing tradition.”<sup>158</sup> While Bin Laden’s “*jihad* stems from a critical view of Western values

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<sup>153</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “Fundamentalism,” 507.

<sup>154</sup> Sargisson, “Religious fundamentalism,” 273.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 273-274.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 275. Also, Kim Jong Il, “On Some Problems of the Ideological Foundation of Socialism,” (speech delivered to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Worker’s Party of Korea, May 30, 1990), <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/104.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2008), 16. “The imperialists are threatening the socialist countries by means of nuclear weapons on the one hand and on the other hand they are appeasing them with money.”

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 276. Also, Kim Jong-il, “On Preserving the Juche Character,” 2. “Since each nation has a peculiar cultural tradition that has been formed and consolidated down through history, it is impossible to meet the masses’ desire for independence and their interests to the full if their national character is ignored. It is only when the socialist cause preserves the Juche character and national character that it can be a truly revolutionary cause that champions and realizes independence for the masses and ensures the independent development and prosperity of the nation.”



and also a critique of ‘corrupt’ Muslim practices and regimes,”<sup>159</sup> Pyongyang’s Juche idea claims to be a similar vanguard for Communism and non-aligned countries, which are in opposition to “the imperialists and the U.S.”<sup>160</sup> In as much as U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia — stationed and “immorally invited” by the Royal Saudi family — are regarded by some fundamentalist Muslims as “a blasphemous occupation of sacred space,”<sup>161</sup> North Korean rhetoric towards the U.S. military presence on the Korean peninsula resonates likewise.<sup>162</sup> Muslim fundamentalists call for “Rigorous Qur’anic observance” as “the path to a better world, combined with political activity which is extrapolated from this core of beliefs and practices.”<sup>163</sup> Similar views are articulated in North Korea:

As we have the Juche idea, we have solved with credit the problem of consolidating the ideological foundation of socialism. If we had not the Juche idea or had we blindly followed others, we would not have been able to build our unique form of socialism which is the most advantageous in the world.<sup>164</sup>

Indeed, the presented evidence and existing parallels with indisputably Fundamentalist Muslim belief systems strongly suggest that North Korean Juche falls in the same category. Consequently, this chapter’s conclusion that Juche is a Fundamentalist North Korean merger of

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<sup>159</sup> Sargisson “Religious fundamentalism,” 276.

<sup>160</sup> “Smashing Imperialists’ Anti-Socialist Moves Called for,” *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, February 4, 2008, Juche 97, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2008/200802/news02/04.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008). “Tough stand against the imperialists and the U.S. and unflinching struggle against anti-socialist, anti-independent moves of the imperialists, the U.S. imperialists in particular, provide a sure guarantee for defending and advancing the cause of socialism and independence. When all independent forces against imperialism including socialist countries, the non-aligned movement and peace-loving forces struggle in unity can they put an end to the imperialists’ domination and interference and build a new independent world.” Paul French reports a similarly meaningful quote: “When Deng Xiaoping told Kim Il-sung that China’s reforms were a window to the West, Kim replied ‘When you open a window flies come in.’” French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 138.

<sup>161</sup> Sargisson “Religious fundamentalism,” 276.

<sup>162</sup> “KCNA demands withdrawal of U.S. troops from S. Korea.” *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, January 9, 2002, Juche 91, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2002/200201/news01/09.htm> (accessed May 11, 2008). “It is due to the U.S. anachronistic hostile policy towards the DPRK and its forces’ continued presence in South Korea that peace, stability and national reunification have not been achieved on the Korean peninsula though the world greeted the second year of the 21st century... The U.S. troops present in South Korea are the source of all misfortune and sufferings of the Korean people and their withdrawal from South Korea after the end of the Cold War is the job to be done by the U.S. before anything else.”

<sup>163</sup> Sargisson “Religious fundamentalism,” 276.

<sup>164</sup> Kim Jong Il, “On Some Problems,” 1.



religious and state ideology under the theocratic rule of the Kim dynasty has a significant impact on the following discussion of socio-cultural issues in the Korean and the comparative German cases.

North Korea's Fundamentalism is clearly relevant to the analysis in the final chapter as to whether Juche could offer inter-Korean common ground or rather function as an ideological barrier upon eventual Korean national unification.

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### **III. THE COMPARATIVE GERMAN CASE: FROM EUPHORIA TO DISILLUSIONMENT?**

To provide the analytical basis for a subsequent investigation of the prospective impact of socio-cultural issues upon an eventual Korean reunification, this chapter examines the experiences and outcomes of the German reunification case.

It could be argued, however, that the German and Korean cases have too little in common to allow a meaningful comparison. These nations are situated in decidedly different regions, with diverse political, cultural and historical backgrounds and environments. Projecting Germany's socio-cultural experiences and challenges in reunification onto the Korean peninsula might therefore appear to be a superficial charade. However, despite the putative discrepancies between the two, the German and Korean cases share significant commonalities.

Both nations were divided as a result of the Second World War. The separated halves had been firmly aligned with the respective hegemons of the East-West conflict during the Cold War. The result was a strong and successful economy within a liberal parliamentary democracy in West Germany, and eventually also in the Republic of Korea (R.O.K./South Korea).<sup>165</sup> In contrast, the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R./East Germany) pursued a Communist

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<sup>165</sup> The Federal Republic of Germany (F.R.G.), also known as West Germany, differed from the ROK in that the F.R.G. was integrated into an array of multinational Euro-Atlantic institutions that have no equivalent in East Asia. The German term Westintegration can be traced back to the F.R.G.'s first Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer (1949-1963), and his concept of combining a transatlantic commitment with integrating the F.R.G. into the Western community of states. Hallmarks of the F.R.G.'s Westintegration were: joining the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, admittance to the Western European Union (WEU) and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1955, membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) and in the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) in 1958, and the 1963 Franco-German Élysée Treaty.

political economy.<sup>166</sup> Within its progressive *Realexistierender Sozialismus*,<sup>167</sup> the G.D.R. developed into an obedient Soviet client and a fully integrated member of the Eastern bloc. At the same time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K./North Korea) initially leaned towards the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.) and subsequently towards the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.). Eventually, the Pyongyang regime chose to pursue a non-alignment policy, based on the Juche idea's notion of self-reliance and independence from international entanglement — however, not without relying heavily on economic aid and support from both the U.S.S.R. and the P.R.C. Hence, the presence of mutually opposed Socialist and Capitalist societies and economies in both the German and the Korean states underlines the relevance and applicability of the comparison.

An initial review assesses how and to what extent socio-cultural reunification has been achieved in the German case. Actual obstacles, drivers, and their limitations in the movement towards an inner unity and a socio-cultural coherence of the two previously divided German societies are identified. Subsequently, this chapter concentrates on the roots and effects of the German issues known as the “Unification Crisis” or the “Wall Inside The Minds.” The concluding portion of this chapter consolidates the socio-cultural issues potentially applicable to both the German and the Korean cases in order to build a bridge towards the next chapter's analysis of how and to what extent factors similar to those in Germany are present in and applicable to today's Korean societies.

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166 O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 199. In a Communist political economy, “Markets and property are wholly absorbed by the state. Central planning replaces the market mechanism. Individual property rights, individual profit, unemployment, competition between firms, and bankruptcy are all virtually eliminated. Most of the nation's means of production are nationalized. The economy functions in essence as a single large firm, with the public as its sole employees. The state provides extensive public goods and services, including universal systems of public education, health care, and retirement.”

167 The term *Realexistierender Sozialismus* (real existing Socialism) was introduced by Soviet propaganda in the 1970s to designate the more open forms of government that had evolved in several Communist countries. The term was often used in order to differentiate traditional, conventional (or ideal) Socialism from *de facto* Socialism existing in the Eastern bloc countries. *Real* referred to the fact that in reality, not all utopian principles of Socialism and Communism could be implemented immediately. Accordingly, in the real world, the *real existing Socialism* would only be an interim arrangement before establishing the ideal, Socialist society. The anti-Communist opposition used the term in a sense of ironic criticism. Other Communist regimes charged that such a watered down version of socialism compromised and betrayed Communism, and consequently chose to relax their alignment with the Soviet Union (e.g., the Democratic Republic of North Korea, D.P.R.K.).

## A. HOW AND TO WHAT EXTENT HAS GERMAN SOCIO-CULTURAL RE-UNIFICATION BEEN ACHIEVED?

On October 3, 1990, the majority of the citizens of the former German Democratic Republic (G.D.R./East Germany) were building high hopes on the outcome of German national reunification.<sup>168</sup> They were looking forward to bright prospects in a democratically free and economically flourishing unified Germany. Only a few, still loyal to the failed Stalinist concept of “real existing Socialism,” had a negative outlook and feared an uncertain future. Today, nearly two decades and an estimated 1.5 trillion Euro after German reunification, the situation is significantly different.<sup>169</sup> A considerable chasm between East and West Germans can still be seen, and it seems likely to persist well into the future. The *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006* maintains that seventeen years after political reunification, Germany’s society is still far from being a cohesive, integrated community.<sup>170</sup> To this date, unified Germany comprises two distinct economic regions, discrete labor markets, varied wage and pay scale zones, and two distinct individual, social, and communal value systems in East and West Germany.<sup>171</sup> Jens Bisky labels

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<sup>168</sup> 3 October 1990 is the date of formal German reunification, and it is observed as a national holiday.

<sup>169</sup> Han Aran, “Term ‘reunification cost’ inappropriate,” Korea.net, October 31, 2007, [http://www.korea.net/News/News/NewsView.asp?serial\\_no=20071026027](http://www.korea.net/News/News/NewsView.asp?serial_no=20071026027) (accessed May 12, 2008). The total cost of German reunification has been estimated to account for up to 1.5 trillion Euro (equal to more than \$ 2.35 trillion in March 2008 ).

<sup>170</sup> Volkssolidarität e.V., <http://www.volkssolidaritaet.de/cms/Wir+%C3%BCber+uns-p-2.html>. Volkssolidarität e.V. is a non-profit welfare organization that was founded in East Germany in 1945. Its purpose was to mitigate the post-World War II social destitution, individual affliction, and other resulting hardships. Today, it brings together individuals and groups who need or who can provide help and support on the base of social solidarity. Its members and associates support the collective experience of shaping and reshaping social and communal solidarity, particularly among East Germans, while simultaneously promoting and facilitating social rapprochement and convergence between East and West Germans. Apart from maintaining social services and facilities offering help and support in everyday life, Volkssolidarität e.V. aims to represent the socio-political interests of minorities and of the weakest members of society in order to promote social equity and the harmonization of living conditions in East and West Germany. Volkssolidarität e.V. regularly commissions the Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum (SFZ) Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. to compile the Sozialreport, a report on the social situation in East Germany. Also, Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum (SFZ) Berlin-Brandenburg e.V., <http://www.sfz-bb.de/Ziele/index.htm> (accessed May 14, 2008). Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum (SFZ) Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. is a non-profit research organization, founded by East and West German social scientists and scholars, with international participation. It describes itself as a product of and a forum for East-West German and international cooperation, aimed at East-West German, European, and international integration. The emphasis of its scholarly interest and its research is on the social aspects of societal transformation to complement the traditionally economy- and technology-focused conceptions of progress, development, and advancement. It aims to provide a theoretical and practical framework for social modernization that is oriented along practical and realistic dimensions of mastering future challenges and opportunities.

<sup>171</sup> Gunnar Winkler, “Sozialreport 2006; Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern,” Volkssolidarität Bundesverband e.V. Berlin: Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg e.V., December 2006, <http://www.sfz-bb.de/Aktuelles/sozialreport2006/sr2006.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2008), 25.

German unity a “Fata Morgana,” a mirage over the abyss divorcing the country.<sup>172</sup> In his view, which is supported by O.E.C.D. data, two-thirds of Germany’s economic struggle since 1990 can be attributed to the huge West-East transfer payments, rather than to an anemic economy in the realm of globalization and unbridled capitalism. Instead of blooming landscapes in the East (“blühende Landschaften”<sup>173</sup>), the results have been a dangerously unstable society, and an economy which is heavily dependent on financial transfers and subsidies.<sup>174</sup> Unsurprisingly, in 2006, 15% of East Germans felt sufficiently aggrieved to claim that they wanted the G.D.R. back, while only 22% were content to identify with the Federal Republic of Germany and its political, economic, and socio-cultural structures. At the same time, a 63% majority stated that they did not identify themselves as F.R.G. citizens yet, but neither would they want to have the G.D.R. back. *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006* holds the enduring deficiencies in integrating the East German population responsible for such sobering findings.<sup>175</sup>

## **B. OBSTACLES, DRIVERS, AND THEIR LIMITATIONS TOWARDS AN INNER UNITY AND A SOCIO-CULTURAL COHERENCE OF THE TWO PREVIOUSLY DIVIDED GERMAN SOCIETIES.**

To this day, socio-cultural issues of varying intensity characterize mutual perceptions and relations between citizens of the former two Germanys, and stand in the way of societal unity and national cohesion. In the wake of German unification and its concurrent political, economic, social, and cultural upheavals, most East Germans have witnessed their accustomed environment

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<sup>172</sup> Jens Bisky, *Die deutsche Frage: Warum die Einheit unser Land gefährdet* (Berlin: Rowohlt), 13. “Fünfzehn Jahre danach ist den Deutschen ihre Einheit zu einer Fata Morgana geworden, zu einer Luftspiegelung über dem Abgrund, der das Land trennt.” In German common parlance the term “Fata Morgana” describes an illusion, or an optical phenomenon. Journalist and author Jens Bisky was born and raised in the G.D.R.. He left the East German Army as a Lieutenant after his voluntarily extended military service. In 1989-1990, Jens Bisky was with *DT64*, the G.D.R. state-run broadcast service’s youth program. Subsequently, he earned a Master’s degree in cultural studies and German studies and was a journalist for the *Berliner Zeitung*. Currently, Jens Bisky is an editor for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Interestingly, his father, Lothar Bisky, had emigrated from West Germany to the G.D.R. in 1959 and had subsequently pursued a career in academia. After German reunification, he went into politics for the PDS, the legatee party of the G.D.R. regime’s *Sozialistische Deutsche Einheitspartei* (SED). Recently, the newly established party *Die Linke*, a left-wing alliance for democratic Socialism, named Lothar Bisky one of its two chairmen in 2007.

<sup>173</sup> Helmut Kohl, “Fernsehansprache des Bundeskanzlers am 1. Juli 1990,” (Chancellor Kohl’s television address to the German nation on July 1, 1990), <http://www.helmut-kohl.de/index.php?msg=555> (accessed May 12, 2008).

<sup>174</sup> Bisky, *Die deutsche Frage*, 45. “Die deutsche Wachstumsschwäche ist nach OECD-Berechnungen zu zwei Dritteln auf die Sonderleistungen für den Aufbau Ost zurückzuführen. Der aber, das größte und teuerste Unternehmen der Bundesrepublik ist gescheitert, die Annäherung beider Landesteile misslungen. In den neuen Ländern entstanden eine transferabhängige Wirtschaft und eine gefährlich labile Gesellschaft.”

<sup>175</sup> Winkler, “Sozialreport 2006,” 26 and fig. 7.2.

and framework of values crumble. At the same time, many lost their initially euphoric sense of security and confidence in the new Western order. High expectations regarding the capabilities of West Germany's Social Market Economy,<sup>176</sup> and the quality of its social safety net, combined with elation about the much longed for virtues of democracy, consumerism and free travel, gradually gave way to disillusionment, frustration, and angst. As a considerable number of East Germans feel that they have been "losers" in the unification process, they often feel singled out as second class citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>177</sup> Many consider themselves as "Absteiger"<sup>178</sup> (that is, someone who is descending) and identify themselves as members of the "second deceived generation."<sup>179</sup>

Jürgen Kocka provides an account of East Germany's post-unification Westernization and its economic ramifications. He explains that the drastic transition, modernization, and streamlining of the East German economy triggered an equally sweeping decline in employment in conjunction with a change in employment patterns and structures in the East German states.<sup>180</sup> Between 1989 and 1992 the total number of available jobs in East Germany was reduced by 34% from 9.3 to 6.2 million. Even more impressive are Kocka's figures about the decay and change

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<sup>176</sup> In order to mitigate the social consequences of unbridled capitalism, the Federal Republic of Germany adopted its Social Market Economy concept (Soziale Marktwirtschaft) in 1947. Accordingly, it is the government's responsibility to achieve social accommodation through state intervention and facilitate a balance between a high rate of economic growth, low inflation, low levels of unemployment, good working conditions, strong social welfare, and extensive public services. It has achieved significant successes and is today considered the basis of Germany's social contract and its economic and social order. However, in an era of globalization, the range and amount of state intervention in the market economy, and the future sustainability of the Social Market Economy are being discussed.

<sup>177</sup> Na. Presseportal, "N24-EMNID-UMFRAGE: Ostdeutsche fühlen sich immer noch benachteiligt," news aktuell. October 1, 2007. <http://www.presseportal.de/pm/13399/1058281/n24/rss> (accessed May 12, 2008). An October 2007 survey commissioned by the German news service N24 established that East Germans prevalently feel like second class citizens. Indeed, 74% of East Germans regard themselves as aggrieved and disadvantaged with regard to their fellow citizens in the West.

<sup>178</sup> Jürgen A. K. Thomanek, "From Euphoria to Reality; Social Problems of Post-Unification," in *The New Germany Social, Political and Cultural Challenges of Unification*, ed. John R. P. McKenzie and Derek Lewis (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995), 28. Thomanek cites a 1993 opinion poll which found that "some 35% [of East Germans] believed they had become Absteiger, that is, their social status had declined; this group included mainly women, those over forty, former managers, and the unemployed. Only 13% felt that they were Aufsteiger, that is, their status had risen." [An Aufsteiger is someone who is ascending, advancing in status and position].

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 20. Germany's World War II generation is commonly described as the deceived generation. Due to the traumatic upheaval in the wake of World War II and the ensuing poverty during the rebuilding of Germany, members of this generation have felt defrauded of their youth, their lives, and of their right to pursue wealth and happiness. Many East Germans today refer to themselves as the "second deceived generation in twentieth century German history, a generation that grew up in the GDR and believed in the ideals of socialism."

<sup>180</sup> Jürgen Kocka, *Vereinigungskrise: Zur Geschichte der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Reprecht, 1995), 142.

of the traditional East German economy and its employment structure. The number of jobs in East Germany's agricultural sector, for example, dropped by 70%, from 920,000 in 1989 to a mere 280,000 in 1992. Similar data characterize East Germany's industrial sector. Here, the number of employees declined by 60%, from 3.17 million in 1989 to 1.29 million in 1992. Even the service sector, including government administration, saw a regression of 22%, from 4.35 million to 3.41 million jobs.<sup>181</sup> Kocka summarized the significant socio-cultural impact of such drastic change and upheaval on East German society in euphemistic terms: "More than half of the [East German] population has switched their professions or at least their positions since 1990. Social mobility — up, down, or offset horizontally — has become a mass experience."<sup>182</sup> It may be significant that the officially elected ugliest word of the year in 2005 was "Entlassungsproduktivität" (layoff-productivity), a neologism to describe a company's profit from increased productive efficiency due to firing its numerous redundant employees.<sup>183</sup>

### C. "UNIFICATION CRISIS" AND THE "WALL INSIDE THE MINDS" — ROOTS AND EFFECTS

As early as 1995, West German historian Jürgen Kocka had identified typical differences in East and West German value systems. East German citizens were found to attribute higher value to traditional virtues such as obedience, orderliness, modesty, cleanliness, and to a sense of duty, than West Germans. At the same time they were found to have higher expectations regarding the state and to be less inclined to hedonistic, post-materialistic, and individualistic attitudes than West Germans.

Most prominent, however, was the difference in the importance of work and labor in the two German value systems. While speculating that the East Germans' internalization of traditional German virtues makes them the more typical Germans, Kocka points out that

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<sup>181</sup> Jürgen Kocka, *Vereinigungskrise: Zur Geschichte der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Reprecht, 1995), 142.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. "Mehr als die Hälfte der Bevölkerung hat seit 1990 den Beruf oder doch die Stellung gewechselt, soziale Mobilität ist eine Massenerfahrung geworden – nach oben, nach unten oder seitlich versetzt."

<sup>183</sup> Unwort des Jahres, *Informationen zu einer sprachkritischen Aktion*, <http://www.unwortdesjahres.org/> (accessed May 12, 2008). Unwort des Jahres 2005: Entlassungsproduktivität (Gewinne aus Produktionsleistungen eines Unternehmens, nachdem zuvor zahlreiche für „überflüssig“ gehaltene Mitarbeiter entlassen wurden).



employment and labor carry more relevance for East Germans than for West Germans.<sup>184</sup> Kocka's analysis resonates with Jürgen Thomanek's explanation of the significance of work for the individual in the Socialist system: "a basic tenet of Marxist ideology holds that human beings realized [sic] their full potential through creative work."<sup>185</sup> Both Kocka and Thomanek underscore that East Germans define themselves more significantly via their labor and employment status than do West German citizens. These distinctions may be related to more profound differences in attitudes towards work in Catholic and Protestant Germans. Konrad Adenauer's Rhenish Catholicism has been contrasted with the Reformationist *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, to cite the title of Max Weber's famous book. In the Protestant outlook, industriousness was regarded as a virtue and work as a commission in the name of God.<sup>186</sup> It is worth recalling that the population of the G.D.R. was predominantly Protestant, while West Germany included mainly Catholic regions such as Bavaria and the Rhineland.

However, regardless of ideologies or different levels of individual identification through labor and employment, the importance of work and accomplishing a task is widely regarded as of essential significance in a person's life. For example, according to a 2006 British government publication, "For individuals and families, the benefits of work are clear...It strengthens

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<sup>184</sup> Kocka, Vereinigungskrise, 146. "Für manchen Beobachter erscheinen die Ostdeutschen als die typischeren Deutschen, insofern sie tiefer in älteren deutschen Traditionen verwurzelt sind ... ."

<sup>185</sup> Thomanek, "From Euphoria to Reality," 12.

<sup>186</sup> Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003), 264, quoting German Lutheran theologian Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), who maintained that "One does not only work in order to live, but one lives for the sake of one's work, and if there is no more work to do one suffers or passes away." ("Man arbeitet nicht allein, dass man lebt, sondern man lebt um der Arbeit willen, und wenn man nichts mehr zu arbeiten hat, so leidet man oder entschläft.") Interestingly, the German word *Beruf* denotes a vocation or calling (*Berufung* – appointment/calling), rather than merely a profession, occupation, career or a job. This attitude toward work might reflect the Protestant ethic. For the German original see Max Weber, "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I* (Tübingen 1988), 171. In contrast, German Roman Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper holds that work is not an end in itself but aims at the happiness of existence in a life of worship. Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 1998). From a Thomistic outlook, Pieper defends "occupied leisure" as a necessary supplement to the world of work. In his view, culture and leisure both are essential prerequisites for man's fulfillment. Accordingly, Pieper promotes the notion of "de-proletarianization" (p. 39), to liberate today's individual from his work-focused life and in order to provide for a richer and more fulfilling existence. Josef Pieper's views are naturally opposed to the Communist ideology. "The total working state needs the spiritually impoverished functionary, while such a person is inclined to see and embrace an ideal of a fulfilled life in the total 'use' made of his 'services'" (p. 43).

independence and dignity. It builds family aspirations, fosters greater social inclusion and can improve an individual's health and wellbeing."<sup>187</sup>

Accordingly, in the *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006*, a mere 8% of East German interviewees expressed a primarily hopeful attitude towards a positive future, while 38% primarily felt apprehension and concern for their personal outlook.<sup>188</sup> Additionally, while four out of five East Germans articulated partial or complete discontent and frustration with their future prospects, only one out of five saw satisfactory future prospects for his personal situation. In its traditional turn of the year 2006 survey, the *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (IfD)*<sup>189</sup> found distinct developments and "climatic zones" of optimism in East and West Germany.<sup>190</sup> From 2004 to 2006, East German hopefuls had increased by 7 percentage points to 42% (35% in 2004), while the West German optimists had increased by 12 percentage points to 51% (39% in 2004).<sup>191</sup> According to the *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006* data from 1994 to 2006, the degree of discontent of East German citizens regarding their future prospects reached a historical high with the 2005/2006 data. From 2000 to 2006, the East German contentment quota dropped more than half, from 42% to 20%.<sup>192</sup> Correspondingly, a 2006 Leipzig University study found a noteworthy difference in contentedness between East and West Germans, especially with regard to income and career. On a zero to ten scale East Germans rated their income contentedness at 3.80 (career contentedness: 3.95), while West Germans deemed theirs significantly higher at 6.12

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<sup>187</sup> United Kingdom, Department for Work and Pensions, "A New Deal For Welfare: Empowering People to Work," (CM 6730, London, January 2006), [http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/docs/A\\_new\\_deal\\_for\\_welfare-Empowering\\_people\\_to\\_work-Full\\_Document.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/docs/A_new_deal_for_welfare-Empowering_people_to_work-Full_Document.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2008), 2.

<sup>188</sup> Winkler, "Sozialreport 2006," 8.

<sup>189</sup> The Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach – Gesellschaft zum Studium der öffentlichen Meinung mbH (IfD) has been one of (West) Germany's most renowned polling institutes since 1947. It is rated to be within the conservative spectrum and generally focuses on media, political, social, and market research. Traditionally, the institute has conducted its turn of the year study to form an impression of German citizens' optimism for the New Year as an economic and business trend indicator. Since 1949, the question has been: "Sehen Sie dem neuen Jahr mit Hoffnungen oder Befürchtungen entgegen?" (Are you facing the New Year with hopes or with apprehensions?).

<sup>190</sup> Berichte Allensbacher, "ZUM JAHRESWECHSEL: Die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung hat sich weiter verbessert," Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, Gesellschaft zum Studium der öffentlichen Meinung mbH. Nr. 20 / 2006 (December 2006). [http://www.ifd-allensbach.de/pdf/prd\\_0620.pdf](http://www.ifd-allensbach.de/pdf/prd_0620.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2008), 2-3. "Neben der allgemeinen Stimmungsverbesserung in der Bevölkerung zeigt sich zugleich aber auch, daß sich in Deutschland ... zwei Klimazonen entwickeln. Denn die Entwicklung zu mehr Optimismus verläuft in Ostdeutschland sehr viel langsamer als in Westdeutschland."

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Winkler, "Sozialreport 2006," 9.

(career contentedness: 6.31).<sup>193</sup> This decrease in hope and confidence for the future, accompanied by growing discontent among East Germans, seems profoundly perturbing. It is testimony to a reduced quality of social engagement and a reduced quality of life for individual citizens. Its implications for Germany's political system, institutions, economy, and civil society could be devastating and lay the ground for conflict, extremism, and the reemergence of anachronistic political currents. While some observers have advocated consolidating the legitimacy of democracy and the market economy by educating East German citizens in the appreciation of these values,<sup>194</sup> the *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006* makes the point that — apart from tangible, actual living conditions and contentedness in society — a society's quality is characterized by the individual's future perspectives and his personal perception of future prospects, possibilities and opportunities.<sup>195</sup>

Further, Kocka reasons that the G.D.R.'s inherited traditional socialist structures of repression and paternalistic providence left East German society ill-prepared for the rapid Westernization endeavor. Flexibility and swift transition, competition and persistence in uncertainty, and aggressive, energetic exploitation of opportunities in light of odds and risks had

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<sup>193</sup> Elmar Brähler and Oliver Decker, "Deutsche Befindlichkeiten – Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Befragung in Ost- und Westdeutschland 2006," Selbständige Abteilung für Medizinische Psychologie und Medizinische Soziologie der Universität Leipzig. (May/June 2006), [http://medpsy.uniklinikum-leipzig.de/pdf/deutsche\\_befindlichkeiten\\_2006.pdf](http://medpsy.uniklinikum-leipzig.de/pdf/deutsche_befindlichkeiten_2006.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2008), 10 and 11, fig.6. "Lediglich in den Bereichen Wohnung, Familien und Partnerschaft gibt es keine deutlichen Ost- West-Unterschiede. In allen anderen Bereichen ist die Lebenszufriedenheit im Osten deutlich geringer, vor allem in den Bereichen Einkommen und Beruf."

<sup>194</sup> Detlef Pollack, "Wie ist es um die innere Einheit Deutschlands bestellt?" Das Parlament mit der Beilage Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Nr.30-31, 24 July 2006. Deutscher Bundestag und Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, <http://www.bundestag.de/dasparlament/2006/30-31/beilage/001.html> (accessed May 12, 2008). A 2006 essay on German inner unity reported the views of delegates of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung after a recent conference with social scientists on the assessment of political culture in the former East Germany. While the social scientists' judgment was inconclusive, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung representatives concluded that enhanced political education of East Germans could stop the eroding legitimacy of West German core values of democracy and the market economy. "Es müsse die Legitimation von Demokratie und Marktwirtschaft durch eine Schulung des Wertebewusstseins der ostdeutschen Bevölkerung gestärkt werden. Die Antworten der Wissenschaftler waren weniger eindeutig: Ob die Ostdeutschen die westdeutsche Institutionenordnung inzwischen weitgehend akzeptiert haben und sich die politischen und sozialen Einstellungen der Ost- und Westdeutschen einander annähern, ließ sich in ihren Augen nur schwer entscheiden." The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is a political foundation with education centers in Germany and more than 120 countries worldwide. Konrad Adenauer's principles of peace, freedom, and justice are the foundation's guidelines to promote the consolidation of democracy, the advancement of European conciliation, the intensification of transatlantic relations, and developmental cooperation. As a research institute and consulting agency, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung compiles scientific research and analyses as a basis for policy. The foundation's academy in Berlin serves as a forum for future-oriented dialogue between representatives of politics, the economy, churches, society, and science.

<sup>195</sup> Winkler, "Sozialreport 2006," 8.

never been virtues and competencies in over forty years of G.D.R. culture and socialist conditioning.<sup>196</sup> West Germany's endeavor to rapidly and comprehensively transfer its internal structure and regime into the East German states morphed the East German revolution into a top-down and externally orchestrated transformation. East German society and individual East Germans became objects of transition instead of active executants and participants in change.<sup>197</sup> This approach prevented successful adaptation and integration.

Similarly, Henri Vogt reasons that the swiftly executed unification through absorption lost many East Germans along the way. Having had no choice but to accept the West German takeover, "many felt that they had become pariahs in their own country, the country that they had been trying to build up as best they could for so many decades."<sup>198</sup>

Along those lines, Jens Bisky offered a more emblematic description of the East Germans' dilemma, referring to Toralf Staud's work on typical immigrant behavior patterns among East Germans. Excessive identification with, or exclusion from, the new culture, for instance, were frequently observed.<sup>199</sup> Bisky implies that G.D.R. citizens eventually became immigrants without relocating. He concludes that such a conception of the German unification process is both accommodating and realistic.<sup>200</sup> Bisky's illustration of the East Germans becoming "immigrants without relocating" seems persuasive. However, David S. Yost's work on political philosophy and international relations theory brings another analogy to mind. In his

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<sup>196</sup> Kocka, Vereinigungskrise, 145. "die für Politik und Leben in der DDR so typische Mischung aus Repression und paternalistischer Fürsorge war die denkbar schlechteste Vorbereitung auf das Leben unter Bedingungen schnellen Wandels, auf das Bestehen in Ungewißheit und Wettbewerb, auf die energische Nutzung der mit Risiken verbundenen neuen Chancen."

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 148. "Die Transformation hat zunächst die Gestalt einer 'Revolution von außen und oben' angenommen. Dies ließ die Ostdeutschen zu Objekten des Wandels werden, statt sie zu dessen aktiven Trägern zu machen."

<sup>198</sup> Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 118.

<sup>199</sup> Toralf Staud, "Ossis sind Türken," *Die Zeit* Nr. 41 / 2003. October 2, 2003, <http://www.zeit.de/2003/41/Einwanderer> (accessed May 12, 2008). Staud, in his 2003 article "Ossis sind Türken" (East Germans are Turks; referring to West Germany's large number of Turkish guest workers and immigrants), made a point by comparing East German manners and attitudes with typical immigrant behavior. He holds that most conflicts and irritations could be explained through the lens of a majority society's expectations and a joining minority society's preferences. In his view the conflict is between the host country demanding absolute assimilation and the immigrants' willingness to merely integrate, and to preserve at least parts of their own identity. After reviewing examples from Russian Jews in Israel to United States citizens of Irish heritage, Staud concludes that West-East German tensions are typical conflicts between a host country and its immigrants.

<sup>200</sup> Bisky, *Die deutsche Frage*, 45. "Ungewöhnlich am Ostdeutschen Fall wäre sogesehen lediglich, dass die DDR-Bürger «eingewandert» sind, ohne den Ort zu wechseln. ... Es gibt keine Vorstellung vom Vereinigungsprozess die so sympathisch und zugleich so realistisch wirkt."

1994 analysis of the late British scholar Martin Wight's published lectures, Yost focused on the "history of Western thought regarding international politics."<sup>201</sup> Though not within the context of German re-unification, Yost observed that due to the dominance of old "traditions of Realism" — traceable to Greek antiquity — Western thought, including that of the Rationalist tradition, "came to justify imperialism" and "colonization" as a paternalistic "right to rule others."<sup>202</sup> Accordingly, a West German attitude — wittingly or unwittingly — of having a paternalistic right to set the tone throughout the German re-unification process appears intriguing and may be worthy of further investigation.

It seems obvious that such alienation fails to create a cohesive, unified national identity. Ultimately, half a century "of independent statehood had created two distinct German identities, and it proved impossible to forget or reconstruct these in the course of a few months or years."<sup>203</sup> Consequently, Vogt held the "central question" of "people's identity" responsible for a spreading *Ostalgie*<sup>204</sup> and explained how East Germans have had to come to terms with their past, rather than cauterizing part of themselves by negating what had been before. At the same time, however, such nostalgia for the old system — arguably to a certain degree an element of human coping — holds considerable long-term risks. Jens Bisky observed that a prevailing nostalgic undercurrent impedes East Germans from setting free their verve, and giving positive expression to their energy. Nostalgia has a paralyzing effect, and it embraces the negative virtue of self-righteousness. Bisky called this "the calamitous inheritance of Chancellor Kohl's unification policy."<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> David S. Yost, "Political Philosophy and the Theory of International Relations," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 70, no. 2 (April 1994), [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-5850\(199404\)70:2<3A2%3C263%3APPATTO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-5850(199404)70:2<3A2%3C263%3APPATTO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>) (accessed May 27, 2008), 263. David S. Yost's article refers to: Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (Leicester: Leicester University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991).

<sup>202</sup> Yost, "Political Philosophy," 283.

<sup>203</sup> Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 119.

<sup>204</sup> GfdS, Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache, Wiesbaden, <http://www.gfds.de/index.php?id=11> (accessed May 12, 2008). *Ostalgie* (Ost-Nostalgie / East-Nostalgia) is a colloquial neologism expressing growing East German nostalgia for the supposed delights and advantages of the German Democratic Republic's political system. The word *Ostalgie* was placed 9th in the German 1993 Word of the Year contest.

<sup>205</sup> Bisky, *Die deutsche Frage*, 15-16. "Allerdings weckt die nostalgische Grundstimmung keine Kräfte, setzt kaum Energien frei. Vielmehr wirkt sie lähmend, und sie stärkt die Untugend der Selbstgerechtigkeit, das elende Erbe der Kohl'schen Vereinigungspolitik."

With regard to social relations, political culture, and everyday life, Kocka noted, East German Westernization has met stern resistance and failed to spawn significant progress.<sup>206</sup> He held that East Germany's post-unification demographic breakdown is a most convincing indicator for economic and psychological corrosion and crisis.<sup>207</sup> According to Kocka, a 60% decline in birth rates, combined with a 65% reduction in marriages and an 81% divorce rate increase among East Germans between 1989 and 1992, revealed their shattered trust and confidence, their inherent loss of orientation, and their generally widespread angst. A more cynical assessment noted that the 1994 East German record low in birth rates — on a worldwide scale — could be topped only by an even lower number of babies delivered in the Vatican.<sup>208</sup> Such significant birth rate declines are rare in history; comparable data could only be correlated to the two World Wars.<sup>209</sup>

Kocka surmised that the limits of East Germany's successful Westernization are currently marked by a reborn, specific, and adamantly defensive G.D.R. identity.<sup>210</sup> He concluded that the present and future challenges of Germany's "Unification Crisis" have become a test case for Germany's parliamentary democracy and institutions, political parties and political culture, and political classes.<sup>211</sup> His 1995 analysis seems to be holding true, and it was confirmed more than one decade later in the *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006*. According to this report, widespread disenchantment followed the initial East German unification euphoria. In 2006 only 9% of East

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<sup>206</sup> Kocka, Vereinigungskrise, 148. "Was jedoch die sozialen Beziehungen, die politische Kultur und das alltägliche Leben anbelangt, trifft der Transfer auf hartnäckigen Widerstand und hat bisher keine großen Fortschritte gemacht."

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. "Auf anderen Ebenen – denen der Wirtschaft und der Psychologie – führte die rasche Übernahme des westdeutschen Systems zu Zerstörungen und Krisen, der demographische Zusammenbruch verdeutlicht dies."

<sup>208</sup> Bisky, Die deutsche Frage, 38. "Eine Zahl charakterisiert die Atmosphäre ganz besonder: 23000 Babys wurden 1994 in den neuen Ländern geboren. Es war die niedrigste Geburtenrate der Welt, nur im Vatikan kamen noch weniger Kinder zur Welt."

<sup>209</sup> Kocka, Vereinigungskrise, 145. "[Demographische] Rückgänge in dieser Größenordnung sind äußerst selten in der Geschichte. Nur die beiden Weltkriege verursachten bislang vergleichbare Einbrüche. ... Es ist naheliegend, diesen demographischen Einbruch auf die durch die Vereinigung verursachte Krise zurückzuführen."

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 148. "Trotz großer westlicher Anstrengungen bei der Eingliederung des Ostens, scheint es, als ob eine eigene DDR-Identität wiederbelebt worden ist, die defensiv und hartnäckig die momentanen Grenzen der Verwestlichung des Ostens markiert."

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 149. "Die Vereinigungskrise wird zu einem Testfall für unsere parlamentarischen Institutionen, Parteien und politischen Klassen."

Germany's adult population was content with the current democratic developments, whereas 33% were only partially satisfied, and 50% were discontented.<sup>212</sup>

Simultaneously, the report underscored a dramatic loss of confidence and trust in societal and governmental institutions among East Germans. While 41% of East Germans were "entirely" or "highly confident" regarding the police, the city and municipal administrations (25%) and the law courts (24%) seemed to strike only about one quarter of all East Germans as trustworthy. The worst rated institutions, however, were the Bundestag (the parliament) and the Federal German Government, with only 5% and 7% of East German citizens "entirely" or "highly confident" regarding their trustworthiness.<sup>213</sup> Accordingly, East German identification with and participation in the democratic structures and institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany is still weak. Kocka's 1995 assertion that West German institutions have diffused into East Germany but have failed to take root, become ingrained, and substitute for traditional societal attachments and connections is supported by the *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006*.<sup>214</sup>

An observation regarding such processes was provided by the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School's Europe specialist, David S. Yost. In his 1994 article "Political Philosophy and the Theory of International Relations," he observed that "Western traditions" in international relations "have shaped international institutions and general attitudes and policies, even (to some extent) in non-Western societies." Yost concluded that "The legacy of Western dominance includes the main institutions of the states-system today, such as diplomatic practices and international law, the United Nations and other global organizations, and international commercial and financial procedures." He reasoned that "further scholarly enquiry into the question of the universality of patterns of thinking about these institutions" was warranted and proposed the "hypothesis that many people in particular countries and/or culture-regions regard nominally universal institutions and values quite differently, owing in part to their distinct

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212 Winkler, "Sozialreport 2006," 22. "Der anfänglichen Euphorie ist Ernüchterung gefolgt. 2006 waren nur noch 9% der über 18-jährigen Ostdeutschen mit dem Stand der Demokratieentwicklung zufrieden, 33% waren teilweise zufrieden und 50% unzufrieden (7% ohne Antwort)."

213 Ibid., 23. "Insgesamt ist das Vertrauen der Ostdeutschen in gesellschaftliche Institutionen eher gering. Am stärksten ausgeprägt ist es (2006) seitens der Ostdeutschen zur Polizei (41% voll/viel Vertrauen ...), zu den Stadt- bzw. Gemeindeverwaltungen (25%) sowie den Gerichten (24%). Bundestag (5%) und Bundesregierung (7%) genießen im geringsten Maße volles/viel Vertrauen und stehen bei den Bürgern nicht hoch im Kurs."

214 Kocka, Vereinigungskrise, 140. "Westdeutsche Institutionen haben sich zwar in den Osten ausgebreitet, in der Bevölkerung konnten sie bislang aber kaum Wurzeln schlagen. Traditionelle Bindungen gingen verloren; ein Ersatz dafür konnte bisher noch nicht geschaffen werden."

traditions.”<sup>215</sup> Though Yost did not aim his findings specifically at the German re-unification case, the fundamental validity of his observations for this case can hardly be contested.

At the same time, in his 1995 essay on the “Vereinigungskrise” (Unification Crisis), Jürgen Kocka concluded that more than forty years of different history had simply created two decisively different German societies in East and West and stood in the way of a swift socio-cultural German unification.<sup>216</sup> Five years after formal unification, Kocka ascribed an increasing East-West German alienation and a faltering inner unification to the decades of drifting apart, and to the different developmental paths of the two German societies.<sup>217</sup> He described the 1990 German unification as a West German absorption of the Eastern part of Germany and as an attempt to extend the successful West German system into the failed East German states. In 1995, however, he observed that the limitations of this absorption and swift Westernization effort of East Germany’s fundamentally different society had become evident. Simultaneously, he identified the reemergence of old structures, ideologies and stereotypes which had amazingly survived the twentieth century’s cataclysms, only to haunt the unified German society once again. Kocka drew attention to the return of xenophobia, ethnic issues, nationalistically motivated tensions, and a variety of other old and familiar prejudices — and not only among the older East German population.<sup>218</sup> The *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006* supported Kocka’s conclusions and suggested that his 1995 analysis is today — more than a decade later — still relevant. Concurrently, the *Volkssolidarität Sozialreport 2006* held the unbridled de-industrialization of East Germany and the dissolution of its agricultural structures, combined with an insufficient and unsuccessful government-run labor-market policy — in the wake of unification and Westernization — responsible for marked and growing political extremism and

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<sup>215</sup> Yost, “Political Philosophy,” 282.

<sup>216</sup> Kocka, *Vereinigungskrise*, 134. “... daß mehr als 40 Jahre unterschiedlicher, wenngleich aufeinander bezogener Geschichte aus einer zwei Gesellschaften gemacht hatten, deren Mitglieder sich wechselseitig stark unterschieden, so daß auch deshalb keine rasche Wiedervereinigung zu erwarten sei.”

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. “Die Entfremdung zwischen Ost- und Westdeutschen hat in den letzten zwei Jahren wieder zugenommen. Das Stocken der inneren Vereinigung zeigt, wie weit man sich in vier Jahrzehnten eben doch auseinandergelebt hat.”

<sup>218</sup> Kocka, *Vereinigungskrise*, 136. “... gleichzeitig staunt man über die Überlebenskraft älterer Strukturen, die die Veränderungsenergien des 20. Jahrhunderts mit seinen Revolutionen und Katastrophen überstanden haben und nun wieder ans Tageslicht treten: zum Beispiel ethnische Identitäten, Nationalitätenkonflikte und geopolitische Konstellationen im östlichen und mittleren Europa, alte Xenophobien und Vorurteile auch bei den Jungen in Deutschland ...”



xenophobia among East Germans. Its analysis indicated that specific economic problems have contributed to East Germany's negative social development.<sup>219</sup>

Cocooning into a sphere of privacy, personal friendships and closely knit private relations seems to be a typical pattern of East German individual behavior that is opposed to the concept of participation in an open, democratic society and that eventually leaves civil society and its democratic structures weak. Latent and frequently manifest social tensions, national extremism, and radical right-wing hostilities in post-unification East Germany are commonly identified as destabilizing developments.<sup>220</sup> At the same time, the World Bank's "World Development Report 1997" seemed to suggest that public rejection of institutions and citizens' declining participation within civil society could weaken the effectiveness of public institutions and reduce the state's capacity to ensure the security and welfare of the people.<sup>221</sup> Simultaneously, the World Bank cautioned: "Marginalized from public discussion and excluded from the broader economy and society, such groups are fertile ground for violence and instability, as many parts of the world are increasingly learning."<sup>222</sup> Accordingly, the "Sozialreport 2006" found that 31% of East Germans at least partially supported the notion that a dictatorial government would be best to secure German interests, while 36% supported — if not fully, at least to a large extent — the view that Germany is entitled a superior place in the world community. The stance that too many foreign nationals live in Germany, and that their number should be reduced in the coming years, was endorsed — at least partially — by 74% of East German citizens.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Winkler, "Sozialreport 2006," 43.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 39-43. Sozialreport 2006 devoted an entire section to analyzing right-wing extremism and xenophobia in East Germany. It concluded that detailed analyses suggest a social progression of right-wing extremism and xenophobia as an outcome of specific economic developments. For a more extensive study of xenophobia and right-wing extremism in the former East German states; see also Gunnar Winkler, "Einstellungen zu Ausländern und rechtsextremistische Auffassungen in den neuen Bundesländern," Reihe: Arbeitspapier, Nr. 133. Hans Böckler Stiftung. Düsseldorf: 2007. [http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p\\_arbp\\_133.pdf](http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_arbp_133.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2008).

<sup>221</sup> World Bank and NetLibrary Inc., World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3, <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/wdr97/english/wdr97eng.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2008).

<sup>222</sup> World Bank and NetLibrary Inc., World Development Report 1997, 4.

<sup>223</sup> Winkler, "Sozialreport 2006," 40. "Einer im Kern ausländerfeindlichen Haltung ('In Deutschland leben zu viel Ausländer, ihre Zahl sollte in den nächsten Jahren kleiner werden.') stimmen 44% der Bürger voll zu und 30% teilweise."

#### **D. CONCLUSION: HOW AND TO WHAT EXTENT HAS GERMAN SOCIO-CULTURAL UNIFICATION BEEN ACHIEVED AND WHAT ARE ITS FUTURE PROSPECTS?**

It can be concluded from the evidence reviewed above that to this day inner unity and social cohesion have yet to be achieved in Germany. The rapid Westernization effort of the new German states was an attempt to create a successful and sustainable political and economic base for a liberal-democratic and prosperous unified Germany, based on the successful West German model. However, the endeavor to transform East Germany by cloning the West German system, some maintain, failed miserably and pulled the rug out from under German society. Owing to widespread frustrated enthusiasm, combined with economic marginalization and social disadvantages, many East Germans felt socially excluded. The resulting aversion to suspicious West German ways gave rise to a developing culture of defiance.<sup>224</sup> Ensuing nostalgia, and naïvely lopsided adulation of the G.D.R. society's benefits, positive norms and virtues, evolved as a basis for an avowal of East German exclusion and of not belonging. It brought forward a separate East German identity.<sup>225</sup> Thus, two partial societies — a majority society of West Germans and a minority society of East Germans — evolved within one German state.<sup>226</sup> Meanwhile, staggering West-East German transfer payments have bolstered the social safety net, have mollified and sedated the East German minority society, and — on the surface — have established peace and quiet on a shaky foundation.<sup>227</sup>

Simultaneously, other views emphasize the political and economic achievements since 1989 and argue that a process of social cohesion will soon follow to develop common ground between East and West Germans. A January 2006 *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach* poll is just one example of the basis for such optimism. According to this poll, for the first time since German unification, more than half of all East German interviewees (54%) stated they identified

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<sup>224</sup> Bisky, *Die deutsche Frage*, 36. "Das war eines von vielen Zeichen für die Entwicklung einer Trotskultur. Man hatte eine Revolution angezettelt und ein anderes System gewollt. Nun schienen die Herren aus dem Westen den Osten zu überrollen."

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 10. "Nach der Wende hat sich eine eigene ostdeutsche Identität herausgebildet, ein deutliches Bekenntnis, nicht dazugehören."

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. "Fünfzehn Jahre nach der Wiedervereinigung existieren zwei Teilgesellschaften in einem Staat."

<sup>227</sup> Bisky, *Die deutsche Frage*, 22-23. "... die Gesellschaft ist nach wie vor schwach, viele leben in prekären Verhältnissen. Die Transferleistungen haben hier für Ruhe und Ordnung gesorgt. Aber der Grund blieb schwankend, Soziales, Politik und Wirtschaft ohne halt."

themselves primarily as Germans, rather than as East Germans.<sup>228</sup> While this is at first sight a seemingly significant development, these figures also imply that 46% still do not identify themselves primarily as simply Germans, but continue to identify themselves as East Germans. The analogy of a half-full or a half-empty glass comes to mind and leaves the observer bemused, without a clear-cut, black and white, easily quantifiable picture.

However, for the purpose at hand, such a distinctively quantifiable picture is not necessarily imperative. The evidence presented above underscores a significant qualitative disparity in culture between the two divergent societies in East and West Germany: pre- and post-unification. It also strongly suggests that such variance has been effected by the decades-long political, ideological, and cultural conditioning of the respective societies.

The supposition that the abiding socio-cultural cleavages between East and West Germans will only eventually be surmounted in society's collective consciousness, to be replaced with a cohesive and unified German identity, seems not at all far-fetched.<sup>229</sup>

At the same time, the persisting socio-cultural tensions between East and West Germans, nearly two decades and an estimated 1.5 trillion Euro after German unification, underscore individual and societal receptiveness to, and the potency and the resilience of, ideology, emotional bonding, and societal conditioning.

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<sup>228</sup> Elisabeth Noelle und Thomas Petersen, "Deutsche Einheit: Ost und West bewegen sich aufeinander zu," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Nr. 21 / Seite 5. Frankfurt 25 January 2006. <http://www.faz.net/s/Rub594835B672714A1DB1A121534F010EE1/Doc~E46B42F0CD8E64B7CA3161AB63FED-E15C~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html> (accessed May 12, 2008). "In diesem Jahr sagen nun zum ersten Mal 54 Prozent der Ostdeutschen, also die deutliche Mehrheit, sie fühlen sich in erster Linie als Deutsche." Prof. Dr. h.c. Elisabeth Noelle is benefactress, and has been on the executive board of the *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach Gesellschaft zum Studium der öffentlichen Meinung mbH* (IfD) since 1947.

<sup>229</sup> Noelle und Petersen, "Deutsche Einheit." Elisabeth Noelle und Thomas Petersen observed in 2006 that traumatic events and experiences can characterize a nation and stay in its collective memory for centuries. It is argued that a nursery rhyme – commonly known throughout German regions – can be traced back more than 350 years, to the Thirty Years' War, when Swedish troops ravaged and looted the German states („Maikäfer, flieg'! Der Vater ist im Krieg. Die Mutter ist in Pommerland, Pommerland ist abgebrannt. Maikäfer flieg.“ – Fly May bug, Fly! Father is at war. Mother is in Pomerania, Pomerania has been scorched. Fly May bug, Fly). The woeful nursery rhyme has survived German division and remains part of unified Germany's collective culture and identity to this day. It echoes the society's traumatic experiences during the Thirty Years' War, which annihilated two thirds of the population in some regions. The article raises the question of how long more than forty years of division will probably reverberate in Germany's collective memory.

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#### IV. THE RELEVANCE OF GERMANY'S RE-UNIFICATION EXPERIENCE FOR THE TWO KOREAS

The earlier examination of the German unification case indicated that political and economic harmonization between West and East Germany had a high priority in the wake of unification. Economic stabilization, and consolidation of the political system in the acceding East German regions, would be the imperative foundation for a stable and unified Germany, able to fulfill its obligations within the European and transatlantic framework. Initial grievances, owing to personal disappointments during the process of transforming an inefficient socialist command economy into a modern, globally interdependent, and efficient market economy, were expected and could be coped with. West Germany's posture, as one of the strongest European economies and a consolidated institutional democracy, would allow for sufficient resources, a strong political will, and widespread popular support to achieve a swift and effective *Aufbau Ost*.<sup>230</sup> However, the German buzzwords *Vereinigungskrise* (Unification Crisis) and *Mauer in den Köpfen* (Wall Inside The Minds) refer to an aspect of German unification which is connected to, but lies beyond, the mere material plane of economics and politics. Socio-cultural disparities between many East and West Germans, based on ideologies, emotional ties, and societal conditioning, proved to be robust long-term factors for constricted individual and group interrelations. Such conflicts — mostly subdued to subliminal perception — would typically take on greater significance with the rising disillusionment, economic marginalization, and social exclusion of many East Germans.

Accordingly, the following section reviews the prospective parallels between the German and the Korean cases and assesses shared socio-cultural drivers affecting an eventual unification of the Korean societies. While an extensive body of data, literature, and research pre- and post-unification is available on the German case, the situation for the D.P.R.K. is entirely different. Due to the secretive and reclusive nature of the totalitarian North Korean regime, its official data is scarce; statements from international institutions and non-governmental institutions are seldom primary sources and rely on deductions or estimates. Pyongyang's officially sanctioned

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<sup>230</sup> The term *Aufbau Ost* (Rebuilding in the East) refers to the institutional and economic reconstruction which followed German re-unification. The aim was to bring living conditions in both East and West Germany closer together. As almost the entire East German industry was outdated, enormous efforts were called for to modernize it. In order to fund the rebuilding and development of the former East Germany the *Solidaritätszuschlag* (solidarity tax) was implemented in July 1991 (an additional income tax, initially 7.5%, since 1998 reduced to 5.5%).

information is usually subject to propaganda and not beyond doubt. Moreover, publications on “internal dynamics of this society, let alone with its daily life, are few and far between.”<sup>231</sup> While such circumstances prohibit a solid quantitative analysis, a range of publications is available to capture the qualitative aspects of ideology, emotions, and interaction within North Korean society. To this purpose, accounts from North Korean refugees and defectors<sup>232</sup> and reports from foreign nationals who lived in North Korea,<sup>233</sup> in addition to Korean press releases, are utilized in the following section to paint a picture of North Korea’s socio-cultural milieu.

## **A. THE BASIS OF NORTH KOREA’S SOCIETAL ORGANIZATION**

Elementary topics within the existing body of literature on North Korea include the Kim dynasty’s personality cult and its penetration of daily life in North Korea. Former labor camp inmate and later defector Chol-hwan Kang, for example, describes the personality cult and its high degree of emotional bonding when recalling his childhood memories as follows:

Kim Il-sung was actually even better than Father Christmas, because he seemed so eternally young and omniscient. Like his son, Kim Jong-il, who was said to be in line to succeed him, he was more like a god to us than Father Christmas. The newspapers, the radio, posters, our textbooks, our teachers: everyone and everything seemed to confirm this.<sup>234</sup>

Chol-hwan Kang concluded that Kim Il-sung “was the object of a personality cult extravagant enough to rival that of Stalin or Mao Tse-tung, and indeed, even to outlive them. In 1998, the People’s Supreme Assembly even made the astounding decision to name Kim Il-sung president ‘for all eternity’ — four years after his death!”<sup>235</sup> At the same time, Michael Harrold, a longtime

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<sup>231</sup> Lankov, *North of the DMZ*, 331.

<sup>232</sup> Kang and Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang*. Chol-hwan Kang, a former prisoner in a North Korean penal camp, defected to South Korea. His account describes life in North Korea from a Japanese-Korean immigrant family’s view. Hunter, *Kim Il-Song’s North Korea*. Additionally, Helen-Louise Hunter published her declassified version of a CIA sociological study of everyday life in North Korea in 1999. Due to the classified nature of Hunter’s primary sources from within the United States intelligence community, and despite former Congressman Stephen J. Solarz’s endorsement, her analyses can unfortunately not be further verified.

<sup>233</sup> Michael Harrold, *Comrades and Strangers Behind the Closed Doors of North Korea* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2004). From 1987 to 1994, Michael Harrold lived and worked in North Korea as an editor for the Pyongyang regime’s Foreign Languages Publishing House. His account of daily life in North Korea, from a young British citizen’s perspective, draws a sympathetic picture of “the world’s most closed society.”

<sup>234</sup> Kang and Rigoulot, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang*, 2.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Pyongyang resident employed by the government-run Foreign Languages Publishing House, revealed the extent of commonly accepted state intrusion:

North Koreans are urged, even obliged, to turn to the great leader [Kim Il-sung] in all they do. Regular weekly study sessions are held at which the people learn by heart sections of the works of the great leader, on topics ranging from such general matters as public security and what is considered proper behavior in the street and at work, to guidance in their professional and political activities, to intimate personal hygiene hints on brushing their teeth and washing their feet.<sup>236</sup>

Helen-Louise Hunter based her work on an extensive, now declassified, CIA sociological study of everyday life in the D.P.R.K. She specifically identifies and addresses two distinctive attributes which classify North Korean individuals and form “The Twin Pillars of Society.”<sup>237</sup> In her view, *songbun* (“class background”) and *Kim-Il-song sangsa* (“The thought of Kim Il-song”) are the two basic concepts defining North Korean society. They are the basis to understanding North Korean individuals, groups, relationships, social status, decision-making, and reasoning. In short, *songbun* and *Kim-Il-song sangsa* entirely delineate individual, public, and political life in North Korea.<sup>238</sup>

## **B. NORTH KOREAN CLASS BACKGROUND AND LOYALTY TO THE KIM CULT**

A person’s *songbun* defines his position within North Korean society, according to his family’s class background. Descendants of combatants in the anti-Japanese struggle and families of Korean War veterans, followed by individuals with a working class or peasant heritage, enjoy the highest status of trustworthiness and are eligible for higher education and professional and societal advancement. According to Hunter, this group comprises 25 to 30 percent of the North Korean population. “Ranked below them in descending order are forty-seven distinct groups in what must be the most class-differentiated society in the world today.” Of these remaining, roughly 40 percent are average citizens, without a significantly positive or negative birthright, who “hope for a lucky break, such as a good assignment in the military that will bring them to the attention of party cadres and get them a better job.” The remaining 30 percent of the population — descendants of the pre-Communist elite or dissidents — are treated as the society’s

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<sup>236</sup> Harrold, *Comrades and Strangers*, 40.

<sup>237</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 1.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-6.

residuum. They constitute a pariah class, without any hopes beyond a mediocre education. For them, the future holds an existence in lowly manual labor, often in secluded and rural areas. They cannot have any reasonable hope for advancement in the professional and social hierarchy for themselves or their children.<sup>239</sup> In order to verify and continuously update the individual *songbun* ranking, North Korea's security apparatus "conduct[s] repeated investigations to the point where everyone has been investigated and reinvestigated, and investigated yet again."<sup>240</sup> The outcome of such a coercive domestic organization is, as Bruce Cumings put it, "twenty-two million citizens each with a personal reliability rating."<sup>241</sup>

According to Helen-Louise Hunter, the second "key element" to personal advancement in North Korea, apart from one's *songbun*, is "loyalty to Kim," as expressed in one's *Kim-Il-song sangsa*.<sup>242</sup> While *songbun* — as the concept of class struggle within the framework of Socialist ideology — seems plausible and easily comprehensible, *Kim-Il-song sangsa*, as the thought of Kim Il-sung, appears to be a more complex and more elusive construct to understand. Instead of delving into the details of Juche — the North Korean state ideology — for an explanation, Helen-Louise Hunter simply characterizes North Korea as a "cult society." "North Korean society is very much like a cult society, organized around the cult of Kim Il-song [sic]."<sup>243</sup> She utilizes a variety of examples to convey her notion of the Kim cult and to lend credibility to her convincing assessment that "the Kim cult may prove to be one of the most remarkable cults of all time."<sup>244</sup> The level of Kim veneration seems to amount to deification. It is an efficient mix of emotional bonding and deep ideological indoctrination, and "its hold over the perception and thought patterns of North Koreans is awe-inspiring."<sup>245</sup> As noted in Chapter II, such an assessment can merely attempt to illustrate the effects of Juche on North Korean society. The deep cultivation of the Kim dynasty's teachings in a community whose forms of dependency, communications, and interactions are invariably oriented along Juche fundamentalism is intended to achieve complete control over this "society of believers." The resulting domestic focus and virtual exclusion from external influences are designed to produce a highly marked

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<sup>239</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 4.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 406.

<sup>242</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 31.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 27.



level of isolation and ignorance which, due to its elusiveness, foreigners and the uninitiated frequently characterize as irrational behavior. Consequently, Hunter does not shy from comparing the North Korean people's loyalty and obedience to the Kim cult, which extend "to preposterous lengths at times,"<sup>246</sup> to Jim Jones's or Charles Manson's cultic communes.<sup>247</sup> At the same time, ideology-based reciprocities within society develop their peculiar norms and conventions within the framework of the common belief system. In order to receive a higher education, pursue a career of choice, and advance in societal and professional status in North Korea, a particularly fervent display of *Kim-Il-song sangsa* is required. Since competition within the system is entirely based on political reliability and loyalty, the magnitude of one's display of enthusiasm towards *Kim-Il-song sangsa* matters more than individual merit and professional performance. Indeed, an individual's merit and professional performance derive from, and are based on, memorized teachings, quotations, and insights of the Great Leader or the Dear Leader, rather than from true achievements in everyday life. Helen-Louise Hunter concludes that "one's advancement will be determined much more by one's display of devotion to Kim's teachings than by one's technical or administrative or substantial skills."<sup>248</sup> This suggests that the society's officially sanctioned value system has been significantly reoriented during the Kim dynasty, from a traditional materialistic outlook, into a naïvely spiritualized and quixotic construct based on the superficial but fervent display of personal passion for the state ideology.

North Korea's *songbun* and *Kim-Il-song sangsa*, a combination of aggressive class-based segregation and an all-embracing cultic ideology, seem to represent the two main characteristics of the society's frame of reference. Consequently, both class discrimination and political ideology will have to be compared to determine the relevance of the German unification experience for Korea.

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<sup>246</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 34.

<sup>247</sup> Jim Jones (James Warren Jones) was born on 13 May 1931 in Crete, Indiana, USA, and died 18 November 1978 in Jonestown, Guyana. He was the founder of the Peoples Temple sect. He died in a mass-murder-suicide which also claimed over 900 of his followers' lives in the cult's rural commune in Guyana. His name became synonymous for cult-related mass suicide. Charles Milles Manson, born 12 November 1934 in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, was the founder and ringleader of the Manson family. Charles Manson was found guilty of having conspired to instigate members of his cultic family into committing several murders in the late 1960s. His name has become a synonym for evil and cultic manipulation.

<sup>248</sup> Hunter, *Kim Il-Song's North Korea*, 32.

### C. “REALEXITSIERENDER SOZIALISMUS” IN THE G.D.R.: CLASS BACKGROUND, POLITICAL RELIABILITY, LOYALTY TO THE SED PARTY

Contrary to official propaganda, quite distinct class differences could be found in the G.D.R. Martin Diewald’s and Heike Solga’s analysis of “life experiences” (Lebensverläufe) in the G.D.R. found that it would be difficult to validate the notion of a socialistically egalitarian G.D.R. society. Diewald’s and Solga’s work concludes that the G.D.R. society’s functional differentiation brought about noticeable differences in living conditions.<sup>249</sup> A similar conclusion results from a 2004 study on human body height in relation to social class. The report, published by the Bavarian state government, attributed more pronounced body growth to upper class G.D.R. citizens than to those from lower class provenance. As a result, John Komlos und Marieluise Baur concluded that the officially classless G.D.R. apparently failed to achieve its declared objective of an egalitarian society since the difference in body height between upper class and lower class affiliates amounted to 2.5 cm (0.98 in) for males and 3.2 cm (1.26 in) for females.<sup>250</sup>

Particular examples of class distinctions in the G.D.R. were frequently found in the realm of education. Higher education, for example, was only made available to faithful supporters of the political system who had demonstrated *Linientreue* — political reliability and loyalty to the system.<sup>251</sup> The 1958 “Decree on the Socialist Reconfiguration of Higher Education in the GDR” enshrined this principle in G.D.R. legislation.<sup>252</sup> The edict stated explicitly that it was the

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<sup>249</sup> Martin Diewald and Heike Solga, “Soziale Ungleichheiten in der DDR: Die feinen, aber deutlichen Unterschiede am Vorabend der Wende,” in *Kollektiv und Eigensinn: Lebensverläufe in der DDR und danach*, ed. Johannes Huinink (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995), 303, 305. “Angesichts der in diesem und mehreren vorangegangenen Beiträgen präsentierten Untersuchungen dürfte es schwerfallen, an der These einer egalitären DDR-Gesellschaft festzuhalten. ... Die funktionale Differenzierung der Gesellschaft hat ... zu spürbaren Unterschieden in den jeweiligen Lebensbedingungen geführt.”

<sup>250</sup> John Komlos and Marieluise Baur, “Comeback der Kleinen: Warum wir wachsen wenn es uns gut geht,” Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst. *aviso: Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft & Kunst in Bayern* 2/2004, [http://www.stmwfk.bayern.de/downloads/aviso/2004\\_2\\_aviso\\_22-27.pdf](http://www.stmwfk.bayern.de/downloads/aviso/2004_2_aviso_22-27.pdf) (accessed May 14, 2008), 24 and figure 2. “Die Differenz in der Körpergrößen [sic] zwischen ostdeutscher Oberschicht und Unterschicht beträgt bei Männern 2,5 cm und bei Frauen 3,2 cm. Offensichtlich verfehlte die DDR ihr Ziel einer klassenlosen Gesellschaft.”

<sup>251</sup> The term *Linientreue* (being true to party principles) is party jargon for an individual’s personal attachment to the party’s statutes, manifestoes, and resolutions. Typically a citizen’s loyalty to the G.D.R.’s SED party was based on his correct class awareness or class attitude (Klassenbewusstsein / Klassenstandpunkt). According to Lenin, such trueness to party principles would be passed on to the individual citizen through the party’s subordinate mass organizations, as “*Transmissionsriemen der Parteiarbeit*” (transmission belts of party work).

<sup>252</sup> DDR Schulrecht, “Verordnung über die weitere sozialistische Umgestaltung des Hoch- und Fachschulwesens in der DDR vom 13. Februar 1958 (GBl. I Nr. 15 S. 175),” <http://www.ddr-schulrecht.de/Schulrechtssammlung%20-%20DDR-Dateien/pdf/1958-b.pdf> (accessed May 14, 2008).

mission of the G.D.R.'s higher educational institutions to cultivate scientifically and technically trained academic professionals who were devoted to the workers' and peasants' state. These capable and willing individuals were to utilize science and technology for the advancement and development of the G.D.R. socialist state.<sup>253</sup> It was further decreed that selection for admission to higher education should favor able peasant and working-class children or children from military families who were faithfully devoted to the workers' and peasants' state.<sup>254</sup> Accordingly, Jürgen Engert, today a popular German TV journalist and political commentator, was denied university enrollment in the G.D.R. due to his bourgeois class background.<sup>255</sup>

In fact, discrimination according to class background and/or political reliability and loyalty was sanctioned by the G.D.R.'s existing administrative laws and regulations. According to Article 10 of the G.D.R.'s *Bewerbungsordnung* (application regulation), employers were obliged to seek approbation from the local unionist cadre and from the resident youth organization leadership before accepting any job applicants.<sup>256</sup> While on the surface this regulation was meant to promote participation and egalitarianism, such a rule in fact served to ensure that two reliable institutions vouched for the applicant's proper class background and for his political reliability, or *Linientreue*.

Additionally, in his examination of the G.D.R.'s industrial working environment, Wolfgang Zimmermann found that career paths were determined by Socialist manpower planning and control, rather than by personal choice. From an official G.D.R. viewpoint, good career choices were put into practice when, to the greatest possible extent, agreement between corporate requirements and individual career interests and affinities could be achieved. Needless

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<sup>253</sup> DDR Schulrecht. "Verordnung über die weitere sozialistische." "Die Universitäten, Hoch- und Fachschulen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik haben die Aufgabe, in genügender Zahl wissenschaftliche und technische Fachkräfte heranzubilden, die der Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Macht treu ergeben sind und die Fähigkeit besitzen, Wissenschaft und Technik dem sozialistischen Aufbau dienbar zu machen."

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., I. 2. n. "Das Staatssekretariat für das Hoch- und Fachhochschulwesen hat folgende Aufgaben: ... n) bei der Zulassung zum Studium zu erreichen, daß der Anteil befähigter Arbeiter- und Bauernkinder, bewährte Kräfte aus der sozialistischen Produktion, der Nationalen Volksarmee und anderen bewaffneten Organen sowie aus Kreisen, die der Arbeiter- und Bauern-Macht treu ergeben sind verstärkt wird." "

<sup>255</sup> Orton Huber, „Magister auf Umwegen: Weil er in der DDR nicht studieren durfte, ging Jürgen Engert in den Westen,“ *Freie Universität Berlin, Kommunikations- und Informationsstelle*. November 18, 2006, [http://www.fu-berlin.de/presse/publikationen/tsp/2006/ts\\_20061118/ts\\_20061118\\_09.html](http://www.fu-berlin.de/presse/publikationen/tsp/2006/ts_20061118/ts_20061118_09.html) (accessed May 14, 2008).

<sup>256</sup> "Anordnung über die Bewerbung um eine Lehrstelle – Bewerbungsordnung 1982," *Bewerbungsordnung §10 (2). Bearbeitung der Bewerbungen*, <http://www.drkoerner.net/DDVerordn/bbbewerbord.htm> (accessed May 14, 2008). "Der Leiter des Betriebes gewährleistet, daß die zuständige betriebliche Gewerkschaftsleitung und die Leitung der FDJ-Grundorganisation des Betriebes an der Entscheidung über die Bewerbung teilnehmen können."

to say, personal preferences and desires would have to yield to the overall benefit of the Socialist system. While the G.D.R. bureaucracy's administrative euphemism was *Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit* (understanding for the necessity), Wolfgang Zimmermann concluded that strong constraints on the individual citizens' career and job choices could be substantiated in the G.D.R.'s Socialist system.<sup>257</sup> Gitta Scheller's 2005 analysis came to a similar conclusion. She explained how, starting in the sixth grade, students would receive career counseling and guidance with the aim of matching individual preferences and abilities to the economy's requirements. According to one 23-year-old interviewee, one would simply be steered — socialistically — towards the “right” choice. In short, Gitta Scheller's analysis supported the view that in reality there was never actual freedom to choose a career, an education, or a job in the G.D.R.<sup>258</sup>

Similar examples were manifold and affected all aspects and all levels of daily life in the G.D.R. Housing, education, profession and career — and access to consumer goods, luxury goods and privileges — were strictly allocated according to proper class background and political reliability. The proper functioning of such an allocation system was to be ensured by the G.D.R.'s government institutions, in cooperation with the party's subordinate mass organizations. For an added measure of control, these institutions and mass organizations were

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<sup>257</sup> Wolfgang Zimmermann, “Die industrielle Arbeitswelt der DDR unter dem Primat der sozialistischen Ideologie,” Teilband 1. Band VIII, LIT Verlag Berlin-Hamburg-Münster, 2002, 508. “Sozialistische Arbeitskräfteplanung und –lenkung waren bekanntermaßen auf die Beeinflussung der Berufswahl und verbindliche Regelungen für die Betriebe verwiesen und steuerten damit den Berufsnachwuchs in die Mehrschichtarbeit. Die Berufswahl ... war dann aus parteibestimmter Sicht ‘richtig’, wenn zwischen den gesellschaftlichen Erfordernissen und den individuellen Berufsinteressen und –neigungen weitgehende Übereinstimmung bestand. ... Die starke Einschränkung von Berufswahl und Wahl des Arbeitsplatzes, die sich im deutschen sozialistischen System nachweisen läßt, wurde auch bei den Berufsanfängern als ‘Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit’ definiert.”

<sup>258</sup> Gitta Scheller, “Die Wende als Individualisierungsschub: Umfang, Richtung und Verlauf des Individualisierungsprozesses in Ostdeutschland,” VS Verlag Wiesbaden, 2005, 71. “Um eine Kompatibilität zwischen Ausbildungs- und Berufsbereich zu gewährleisten, wurde i.d.R. bereits ab der 6. Klasse eine Berufsberatung und –lenkung durchgeführt, die von dem Ziel getragen war, Wünsche und Fähigkeiten der Heranwachsenden mit den Erfordernissen der Wirtschaft in Einklang zu bringen. Von einer freien Berufswahl, einer freien Wahl der Ausbildungsstätte und des Arbeitsplatzes kann also für die DDR nicht die Rede sein. ... ‘Man wurde da’ – so eine 23-jährige Bewohnerin in Gotha, ‘sozialistisch hingelenkt’.”

penetrated and monitored by the *Staatssicherheit* to a remarkably high level.<sup>259</sup> Official agents and informal associates (*Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* — IM) from among the population — pressed, blackmailed, or lured with prospective privileges into collaboration with the *Staatssicherheit* — would report on colleagues, friends, and even on members of their own family.

The Pyongyang regime commands a similarly coercive and aggressively intrusive security apparatus which has been equally involved in, and utilized for, “armed invasion, border violations, infiltration of armed saboteurs and spies, hijacking, kidnapping, terrorism (including assassination and bombing), threat/intimidation against political leaders and media personnel and

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<sup>259</sup> The *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (MfS, colloquial *Stasi* or *Staatssicherheit*), established on February 8, 1950, was the G.D.R.’s interior and exterior intelligence service. At the same time the MfS served as government institution to investigate political crime in the G.D.R. The MfS’s main function was as an instrument of suppression and surveillance – the SED party’s shield and sword (*Schild und Schwert der Partei*) – to secure the party’s and the government’s authority. The MfS was known to utilize means of observation and intimidation, but also terror and torture, against dissidents and against the political opposition. It is estimated that, in 1989, the MfS employed around 91,000 accredited agents, in addition to another 100,000 informal associates (*Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* – IM). Based on assessments that roughly 140,000 of those associates were operating within indigenous G.D.R. borders, one out of fifty East Germans would report on colleagues, friends and family to the *Staatssicherheit*. Subsequent analysis of MfS records established that, throughout the 1980s, the *Stasi* had been instrumental in training several West German *Rote Armee Fraktion* (R.A.F. – Red Army Fraction) terrorists in the use and handling of weapons and explosives. Subsequently, fugitive R.A.F. members, wanted in West Germany for kidnapping, murder and assassinations, were harbored by the G.D.R. They were hidden in safe houses, given new identities, and shielded from West German criminal prosecution. In June 1990 – four months before German reunification – ten former R.A.F. members were exposed and arrested throughout the G.D.R. With the exception of two, whose criminal offenses had lapsed, all were sentenced to long prison terms. In March 1991, five former MfS agents were arrested in Berlin due to their R.A.F. involvement. They were arraigned for supporting a terrorist organization and for abetment to murder, and later convicted. However, in 1998, the German Federal Supreme Court repealed their sentence. As MfS agents, it was argued, they had been obliged to follow official orders to cooperate with and support the West German RAF terrorists. For a R.A.F. chronology of events from 1968 until 1999 see „Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF) Chronologie,“ LANDESAMT FÜR VERFASSUNGSSCHUTZ Baden-Württemberg, 2008, [http://www.verfassungsschutz-bw.de/links/links\\_terrorismus\\_raf\\_chrono\\_druck.htm](http://www.verfassungsschutz-bw.de/links/links_terrorismus_raf_chrono_druck.htm) (accessed May 14, 2008). For further information regarding the cited legal details see: „Bundesgerichtshof spricht ehemalige Angehörige des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit vom Vorwurf der Strafvereitelung frei,“ BGH, Mitteilung vom 5. 3. 1998 – 20/ 98, <http://lexetius.com/1998,1374> (accessed May 14, 2008)

institutions, and incitement aimed at the overthrow of the South Korean government.”<sup>260</sup> Additionally, according to the U.S. government’s 2006 “Country Reports on Terrorism,” the D.P.R.K. harbored four Japanese Red Army members who were involved in an airplane hijacking in 1970.”<sup>261</sup>

At the same time, however, G.D.R. leaders were never the subject of cultic adoration or worship. Although Soviet veneration of Lenin and Stalin had been emulated to a certain extent in the G.D.R. until the mid-1950s, it seems safe to say that the G.D.R. leadership’s authority and legitimacy never rested on individual charismatic leaders or their public enshrinement through a cultic organization. Apart from the G.D.R. leaders’ traditionally non-charismatic apparatchik personalities, they certainly enjoyed deference and commanded public respect. Besides, after the Nazi experience, the post-World War II re-creation of a leadership cult would have probably not been a politically opportune choice. Instead, the G.D.R. leadership focused all authority and underlying legitimacy on the SED party, its institutions and the subordinate mass organizations.

In conclusion, the class distinctions and the importance of political reliability and loyalty in the G.D.R. show some significant parallels to the North Korean case. While North Korea’s dynastic Kim cult was unmatched in the G.D.R., it can be deduced that class background and political reliability were significant elements of societal organization — though to a lesser degree — in the G.D.R. As in today’s North Korea, G.D.R. society was far from being liberal and

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<sup>260</sup> Dick Kazuyuki Nanto, “North Korea: Chronology of Provocations, 1950-2003,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (CRS Order Code RL30004), 1, <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL30004.pdf> (accessed May 14, 2008). Similarly, the 1999 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) stated: “There have been regular reports from many official and unofficial sources for at least the last 20 to 30 years that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K.-North Korea) encourages illicit opium cultivation and engages in trafficking of opiates and other narcotic drugs as a criminal state enterprise. Those reports continued in 1999, with several seizures of drugs alleged to be North Korean in origin and several arrests of North Korean officials.” United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 1999 (issued March 1, 2000), <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/1999/924.htm> (accessed May 14, 2008). In contrast, the 2008 INCSR found: “Drug trafficking with a connection to the Democratic People’s Republic of (North) Korea (D.P.R.K.) appears to be down sharply and there have been no instances of drug trafficking suggestive of state-directed trafficking for five years. Small-scale trafficking along the DPRK-China border continues, but as time passes since the last incident of large-scale trafficking involving the use of DPRK state assets and personnel, it certainly seems possible that the DPRK has curtailed trafficking in narcotic drugs. However, there is insufficient evidence to say for certain that state-sponsored trafficking has stopped at this time. The DPRK became a party in March 2007 to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.” United States Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2008, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2008/vol1/html/100780.htm> (accessed May 14, 2008).

<sup>261</sup> United States Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism (Washington, D.C.: The Bureau, April 28, 2006), <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/64337.htm> (accessed May 14, 2008).

egalitarian. Similarly, an individual's social and professional advancement and prospects in life were based on class background, *Klassenbewusstsein*, and on *Linientreue*,<sup>262</sup> as the measures of political reliability and loyalty towards the SED party.

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<sup>262</sup> *Klassenbewusstsein* means class awareness or class attitude, while *Linientreue* stands for being true to party principles. For a detailed discussion of the terms *Klassenbewusstsein* and *Linientreue*, see note 248.

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## **V. JUCHE: IDEOLOGICAL BARRIER BETWEEN THE SOCIETIES ON THE TWO SIDES OF THE 38<sup>TH</sup> PARALLEL OR POTENTIAL COMMON GROUND FOR PROSPECTIVE KOREAN NATIONAL RE-UNIFICATION?**

The final chapter of this thesis examines whether North Korean Juche Fundamentalism is likely to create an even higher “Wall Inside The Minds” and lead to a significantly more potent “Unification Crisis” within an eventually unified Korean society than has been observed in the German case since 1989-1990. The essential question pursued is whether Juche constitutes an insurmountable ideological barrier between the societies on the two sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel or whether it could rather offer common grounds for North and South Koreans and thereby facilitate prospective socio-cultural re-unification.

Initially, an assessment of Juche’s future staying power is conducted. In light of Pyongyang’s obviously growing dependence on foreign aid, continued economic decline, and probably inevitable resulting social unrest, we might soon witness what Andrei Lankov has called “The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism.”<sup>263</sup> At the same time, it could be argued, the Pyongyang theocracy and its fundamentalist religious ideology of Juche have weathered various arduous external and domestic challenges for decades, and have frustrated many contemporary augurs and their prophecies of collapse.

The second section examines Juche’s potential appeal to South Korean society. At first sight, North Korea’s socialist-inspired Juche fundamentalism appears to offer little that might be attractive to a secularly organized South Korean capitalist democracy. Upon closer inspection, however, elements of Juche might well connect with a shared North-South Korean national identity. Such nationalism seems rooted in a shared historical, cultural, and religious narrative, intensified by the common trauma of a colonial heritage, the Korean War, and the ensuing struggles within the respective political systems north and south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Finally, a concluding section consolidates the main findings of this thesis and assesses whether Juche’s characteristics of a “Religion in Transition”<sup>264</sup> could qualify as a pathway for

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<sup>263</sup> Lankov, “The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism,” 95-121.

<sup>264</sup> Thomas J. Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study of North Korea's State Religion* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Book Company, 1999), 341.

eventual socio-cultural Korean re-unification, rather than constituting a persistent ideological barrier between the two Korean societies. The final conclusion is that currently North Korea's Juche constitutes an ideological barrier between the two Korean societies. However, at the same time, Juche holds various cultural, historical and religious aspects which could appeal to both Korean societies and which could offer a prospective vehicle for societal re-unification. Juche's traditional Confucian hierarchical structure, its response to deeply-rooted national and ethnic Korean sentiments, and even its living god and his evolving scriptures and teachings, might offer reasonable opportunities for Juche's future transformation and adjustment to a new reality on a re-unified Korean peninsula.

#### **A. JUCHE'S STAYING POWER — IMMINENT INTERMENT OR TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

According to a 2006 assessment by North Korea expert Andrei Lankov, "The [North Korean] Stalinist system is drifting toward collapse and oblivion. This is a welcome development, and should be encouraged."<sup>265</sup> He acknowledged that "North Korea remains under authoritarian rule."<sup>266</sup> However, as a result of the 1990s famine<sup>267</sup> and North Korean "coping strategies,"<sup>268</sup> Lankov identified "dramatic social changes that have taken place in North Korea over the last fifteen years."<sup>269</sup> He reasoned that the allegedly visible decline of Pyongyang's "information management system... [and] the growth of the market economy," and the eventual "collapse of the elaborate social control system that had defined the lives of the North Koreans since World War II" would herald the regime's collapse.<sup>270</sup> He set forth an optimistic assessment: "Whereas the Chinese government implemented reforms and steered the society in a direction that leaders considered favorable, in North Korea society took that road itself, dragging a rather reluctant state behind."<sup>271</sup> Lankov concluded by recommending engagement with North Korea through "economic exchanges" as "small investments toward larger-scale change in the

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<sup>265</sup> Lankov, "The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism," 121.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>267</sup> Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 408. "Estimates of starvation varied widely, but U.S. Census Bureau estimates suggested that about 1 million North Koreans died as result of famine between 1994 and 1998."

<sup>268</sup> Lankov, "The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism," 113.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 119.

future”<sup>272</sup> that would promote the “ongoing transformation of North Korean society.”<sup>273</sup> In short, he conveyed the impression that the 1990s famine had finally weakened the hermit kingdom sufficiently to leave Pyongyang with no alternative but to agree to “cooperative engagement.”<sup>274</sup> Such a development would, he argued, eventually undermine and collapse the Kim dynasty’s regime.

That optimism, however, turned out to be in stark contrast to the 2007 Amnesty International Annual Report on North Korea:

Opposition of any kind was not tolerated. Any person who expressed an opinion contrary to the position of the ruling Korean Workers’ Party reportedly faced severe punishment and so did their families in many cases... In October [2006], the NGO Reporters Sans Frontieres listed North Korea as the worst violator of press freedom... People involved in public and private religious activities faced imprisonment, torture and execution.<sup>275</sup>

A similar message was conveyed by the March 2008 report of fifteen North Koreans being executed publicly for illegally crossing into China in pursuit of food. According to the BBC, a North Korean official stated, “We shot them to send a warning to people over this.”<sup>276</sup> Likewise, a November 2007 Fox News headline read, “A North Korean factory chief accused of making international phone calls was executed by a firing squad in a stadium before 150,000 spectators, a South Korean aid group reported.”<sup>277</sup> Although the global community by now has

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<sup>272</sup> Lankov, “The Natural Death of North Korean Stalinism,” 121.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>274</sup> Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid, and Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 222. The term “cooperative engagement” was coined by Haggard and Noland in 2007.

<sup>275</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2007: The State of the World's Human Rights*, <http://thereport.amnesty.org/document/15> (accessed May 10, 2008), 160. The “Amnesty International Report 2007” website states that the 2007 report “documents human rights issues of concern to Amnesty International during 2006,” <http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Homepage> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>276</sup> BBC News, “North Koreans ‘shot at frontier,’” *BBC NEWS*, March 5, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7279996.stm> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>277</sup> Fox News, “150,000 Witness North Korea Execution of Factory Boss Whose Crime Was Making International Phone Calls,” *FOX News Network*, November 27, 2007, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,313226,00.html> (accessed May 10, 2008).

become familiar with similar public spectacles in Fundamentalist regimes like Iran,<sup>278</sup> Afghanistan,<sup>279</sup> and Nigeria,<sup>280</sup> such examples hardly support Andrei Lankov's 2006 vision of a weakening and consequently liberalizing regime in a North Korea ripe for collapse.

Accordingly, Lankov's 2008 assessment of the domestic impact of the 1990s famine on the Kim dynasty's regime was more guarded: "All domestic groups whose discontent could have dangerous effects (i.e., the army, police, and populaces of major cities) were kept alive and relatively content through the combination of aid distribution, police terror, and information control."<sup>281</sup>

In contrast to Andrei Lankov's traditional economy-focused examination of North Korea's prospects, Thomas J. Belke puts emphasis on Juche and its "spiritual dimension" to explore prospective future outcomes and the regime's perseverance.<sup>282</sup> While Lankov's economic perspective observed signs of opening, reform and a general relaxation of the regime's iron grip in the wake of the 1990s famine, Belke drew the opposite conclusion from his religiously-focused perspective in 1999.

Belke credited Juche, which he called "A Religion in Transition," as a means to stabilize Kim Jong-il's regime and his control over North Korea's society. According to his assessment, "With the 1990s have come new Juche teachings about 'Red Flag ideology,' the smooth accession of Kim Jong Il to deity upon the death of Kim Il Sung, and an increasing emphasis on

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<sup>278</sup> Mohammad Reza Kazemi, "Mullah-Regime nimmt öffentliche Steinigungen wieder auf," 20 Juni 2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,489628,00.html> (accessed May 10, 2008). According to a June 2007 news release by the German news service *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, Iran's Mullah-Regime had re-adopted punishment by public stoning. Robert Luchs, "Zum Tode durch Steinigung verurteilt," *Internet-Zeitung*, Februar 14 2008, <http://internet-zeitung.blogspot.com/2008/02/zum-tode-durch-steinigung-verurteilt.html> (accessed May 10, 2008). This 2008 article in the German *Internet-Zeitung* confirms this Iranian practice.

<sup>279</sup> Der Spiegel, "Frau in Afghanistan wegen Ehebruchs gesteinigt," *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, April 24, 2005, <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/0,1518,353146,00.html> (accessed May 10, 2008). German news service *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, reported in April 2005 that, for the first time since President Hamid Karsai's takeover from the Taliban, a death sentence against a 29 year old woman had been carried out in Afghanistan by public stoning. The woman had been convicted of adultery.

<sup>280</sup> Canada Free Press, "Six sharia convicts await stoning death in Nigeria." *Canada Free Press*, February 17 2008, <http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/1909> (accessed May 10, 2008). According to a February 2008 article in the *Canada Free Press*, six convicts await public stoning in Nigeria, while "46 others are waiting for amputation."

<sup>281</sup> Andrei Lankov, "Famine in Paradise," *Asia Policy* (Book Review Roundtable), no. 5 (January 2008): 195, [http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia\\_policy/pdf/ap1-lankov.pdf](http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/pdf/ap1-lankov.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2008).

<sup>282</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 79.

exporting Juche abroad.”<sup>283</sup> He further noted, as previously discussed in Chapter II, that Pyongyang’s 1997 institution of the Juche Era calendar “resets the clock of mankind to synchronize the year zero with the year of Kim Il Sung’s birth — 1912.” This, in Belke’s view, is an “important example of the progressive development of the Juche cult religion.”<sup>284</sup> Belke also noticed a shift in the official propaganda’s terminology. While the term “Great Leader” had previously been dedicated solely to Kim Il-sung, in 1997 the official vocabulary started denominating the “Dear Leader” Kim Jong-il as “another great leader.”<sup>285</sup> By September 2000, moreover, official propaganda proclaimed, “The Korean nation has now held in high esteem the great leader Kim Jong Il who is identical with him [Kim Il-sung] in idea, leadership and virtues.”<sup>286</sup> Within three years, the initially almost imperceptible shift had obviously been consolidated, and Kim Jong-il’s succession had been solidified. Belke concludes that today, “under the Juche religious system, Kim Jong Il is considered to be just as much ‘god’ as his father.”<sup>287</sup>

Belke holds that, “linked to the new Juche Era concept,” is Kim Jong-il’s proclaimed “Red Flag Ideology.”<sup>288</sup> The South Korean internet newspaper *The Daily NK* supports Belke’s assessment:<sup>289</sup>

The political section of this year's [2001] New Year Address (published in the form of a public editorial) propagandized the 'Red Flag ideology' and 'military-first politics,' the two ideological pillars of Kim Jong Il's government, explaining

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<sup>283</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 341.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>285</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 343.

<sup>286</sup> KCNA, “Guidance of great leader, basic guarantee for accomplishing cause of national independence,” *Korean News*, News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK provided by Korea News Service (KNS) in Tokyo, September 21, 2000, Juche 89, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2000/200009/news09/21.htm> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>287</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 343.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

<sup>289</sup> Jang Yop Hwang and Han Ki hong, “President’s Message,” *The Daily NK*. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/company.php> (accessed May 10, 2008). “The Daily NK is a North Korea-specific internet newspaper established by the North Korean Democracy Network... The Daily NK believes that only ‘Universal human rights and democracy’ can be the most rational standards through which we could solve many problems occurring in North Korea. Ending the suffering of the North Korean people happening to them even at this very moment is the requirement to achieve Korea’s true development, national reunification, and peace settlement in Northeast Asia. The Daily NK will take the lead in meeting these requirements.” *The DailyNK’s* editor, Sohn Kwang-joo, avows to three principles: “1. Daily NK provides objective and accurate factual reports. 2. Daily NK publishes columns and commentaries that suit the directions of Daily NK. 3. Daily NK aims to increasing domestic and international awareness on human rights improvement and democracy.” Kwang-joo Sohn, “Editor’s Message,” *The Daily NK*, December 9, 2004, <http://www.dailynk.com/english/company1.php> (accessed May 10, 2008).

that 'the foundation for implementing the Red Flag party line lies in strengthening military-first politics.' The 'Red Flag ideology' is simply a ruling ideology for the purpose of controlling the people, camouflaged by the slogans 'Faith in the victory of Socialism' and 'Protect and uphold the Great Leader.' But the military-first politics is a distinct characteristic of the Kim Jong Il regime that deserves more attention and analysis... The media explains that military-first politics is, as its name indicates, 'stressing the importance of the military and putting top priority on strengthening the military.' Unlike superficial political styles meant to exaggerate Kim Jong Il's greatness or benevolence – such as 'magnanimous politics' or 'benevolent politics' – military-first politics seems to be a distinct method of political rule that is manifested in actual government policies.<sup>290</sup>

In contrast to other cases, where Communist campaigns were launched to pursue ambitious revolutionary aims, but turned into nothing but counterproductive smoke and mirrors (e.g., the Great Leap Forward), Juche's religious-ideological potency so far may have proved to outdo mere propaganda and ideology.<sup>291</sup> Accordingly, to stress the importance of Kim Jong-il's newly adapted ideologies, Belke made the point that "under the Juche system, a new 'ideology' is by definition a new divinely inspired religious doctrine."<sup>292</sup> He concluded in 1999 that "Kim Jong Il's recent introduction of 'Red Flag Ideology' represents the introduction of a new super-zealot face of Juche for the 'Juche Era' of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This radical shift may be intended to counter what Kim Jong Il perceives as the threat of growing outside influence on North Korea."<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Key's Dictionary, "Military-First Politics," *Key's* 4, (Spring 2001), <http://www.dailynk.com/english/keys/2001/4/11.php> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>291</sup> Immanuel Chung-yueh Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 655, 657, 691. "In early February 1958, the National People's Congress [of China] announced a 'Great Leap Forward' Movement for the next three years, calling for a 19 percent increase in steel production, 18 percent in electricity, and 17 percent in coal output for 1958. Mao talked about catching up with or even surpassing the British industrial capacity in fifteen years, i.e. 1972... To achieve this phenomenal development record, everyone was urged to participate in industrial production, and in so doing everybody, regardless of his background – government official, peasant, student, professor, worker, etc. – become a proletarian. By the fall of 1958, some 600,000 backyard furnaces had sprung up all over the country... The steel turned out by the backyard blast furnaces could not meet industrial requirements, and many of these makeshift furnaces dissolved in rainstorms... In August 1959, 3 million of the 11 million tons of steel produced in 1958 was pronounced unfit for industrial use – backyard furnaces simply did not perform the same function as the giant steel mill... The general agricultural production index, using 1957 at 100, dropped from 108 in 1958 to 86 in 1959 and to 83 in 1960... All in all, the results of the first years of the Great Leap and the Communes were highly unsatisfactory, and there was great discontent among the people." Chung Min Lee, "The Emperor's Famine," *Asia Policy (Book Review Roundtable)*, no.5 (January 2008): 189, [http://nbr.org/publications/asia\\_policy/AP5/AP5\\_BookReview\\_RT.pdf](http://nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/AP5/AP5_BookReview_RT.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2008). "China's Great Leap Forward of 1958-60 resulted in the deaths of 14-40 million Chinese."

<sup>292</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 348.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

In retrospect, and with respect to the Kim regime's perseverance well into the first decade of the twenty-first century, it appears safe to say that both Belke's 1999 speculation and Kim Jong-il's strategy seem to have been vindicated. Apart from Juche's staying power, the evidence conveys a second, equally important point: Juche religious ideology seems almost infinitely adaptable and transformable. Juche's living god, Kim Jong-il, infallible patriarch over the holy writ and master over the creed, not only explains and interprets the existing scripture. Kim Jong-il's commitment to "succeeding excellently to the cause of the late President Kim Il Sung"<sup>294</sup> implies that his present and future decisions and teachings are — and will be — unerringly in harmony with those of Kim Il-sung, the late founder of the North Korean paradise.

Correspondingly, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School's Korea specialist, Edward A. Olsen, has ascertained that Juche:

has evolved in a relatively innovative manner for a rigid state like the DPRK so that North Korea can adapt to changing circumstances in ways that permit it to avoid admitting any pursuit of reforms which would compel North Korean leaders to admit past mistakes.<sup>295</sup>

Accordingly, the conclusion seems warranted that Juche and its fundamentalist spell — regardless of North Korea's present and future economic situation, material scarcity, privation and famine — are likely to persevere as "the collective consciousness of the 'Kim-country' masses," and as the ironclad legitimizing foundation for the regime of Kim Jong-il and his eventual dynastic successor.<sup>296</sup>

## **B. JUCHE — AN APPEALING CONSTRUCT FOR BOTH KOREAN SOCIETIES? — LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

According to the 1995 Amnesty International Annual Report on the Republic of Korea, "Throughout the second half of the year dozens of students, dissidents, writers, publishers, academics and members of socialist organizations were arrested under the National Security

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<sup>294</sup> "The Committee for Translating and Publishing Kim Jong Il's Works," *The New York Times*, December 16, 1997. A21. Subtitle of a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times*, commissioned by the Japanese

<sup>295</sup> Edward A. Olsen, "Korean Nationalism in a Divided Nation: Challenges to US Policy," *Pacific Focus* XXIII, no. 1 (April 2008): 15.

<sup>296</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 349.

Law<sup>297</sup> for allegedly ‘praising’ and ‘benefiting’ North Korea...Some were accused of being Jusapa<sup>298</sup> (supporters of North Korea's Juche ideology).”<sup>299</sup>

As early as August 1994, *The New York Times* had quoted Rev. Park Hong, “a Jesuit priest and the president of Sogang University,” as stating that “student protesters were being fed instructions from North Korea,” and that “‘jusapa,’ or followers of Kim Il Sung's ideology of self-reliance, had also infiltrated religious organizations, newspapers and political parties.”<sup>300</sup>

Similarly, Bronwen Dalton and James Cotton, in their 1996 work on “political opposition in South Korea,” found that:

Claims by the Sogang University president that ‘15,000 *jusapa*’... have infiltrated political circles, mass communication media and universities also led to the detention of over 2000 people. This included nine Kyongsang University professors who were held on suspicion of ‘benefiting the enemy’ (as defined by the National Security Law).<sup>301</sup>

At the time, Lee Ki Taek, then chairman of the oppositional Democratic Party, was quoted as having labeled the “crackdowns” on the activists a “McCarthyite witch hunt.”<sup>302</sup>

In a 2001 article, Kyung-Ae Park explained the emergence of Jusapa as a consequence of South Korea’s “democratization movement” in the late 1980s. She argued that “North Korea’s

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<sup>297</sup> Harrison, *Korean Endgame*, 94-95. “The National Security Law was used by the Park and Chun Doo Hwan regimes, in particular, to justify blanket, arbitrary arrests of its opponents in the name of national security. Article 7 of the law provides for up to seven years of imprisonment and even the death penalty for vaguely defined ‘anti-state’ and ‘espionage’ activities that ‘praise’ and ‘benefit’ North Korea. The police and intelligence agencies automatically consider it a violation of article 7 for South Koreans to organize, join, or aid in any way groups designated as sympathetic to North Korea. Amnesty International reported that about four hundred people were arrested under the law during 1998, mostly under article 7, and another two hundred were in detention at the end of 1999.”

<sup>298</sup> Cho Kuk, “Tension Between the National Security Law and Constitutionalism in South Korea: Security for What?” *Boston University International Law Journal* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1997): fn. 57, <http://www.humanrights.or.kr/old/HRLibrary/HRLibrary8-kcho1.htm> (accessed May 10, 2008). “*Jusapa*, an abbreviation of *Juche Sasang Pa*, refers to a political faction which follows Kim Il-Sung’s philosophy and North Korea’s policy of National Liberation People’s Revolution.”

<sup>299</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1995: Annual Report Summaries 1995; an Overview of Amnesty International's Annual Report*, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/annualreport.php?id=1C92F2004239835C80256A0F005BB4F7&c=KOR> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>300</sup> Andrew Pollack, “Seoul Drawing Fire for Crackdowns,” *The New York Times*, August 18, 1994, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F05E1D81E30F93BA2575BC0A962958260&sec=&spon=&page=wanted=all> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>301</sup> Bronwen Dalton and James Cotton, “New social movements and the changing nature of political opposition in South Korea,” in *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Garry Rodan (London: Routledge, 1996), 287.

<sup>302</sup> Pollack, “Seoul Drawing Fire for Crackdowns.”



tenacious and fervent emphasis on *Juche* in reunification met with sympathy among South Korean youth, students, and dissidents.” Park concluded that “South Korean students and intellectuals” who “believed in *Juche* and aimed at eliminating foreign powers from South Korea” set out to “voice their aspirations for reunification, which even included a demand to pursue reunification on North Korean terms.”<sup>303</sup>

Such an intellectual world within the Jusapa faction, apparently naively combining progressive and nationalistic motives for democratization and reunification, was also observed by Chang Hun Oh and Celeste Arrington in 2007. Their study of “Democratization and Changing Anti-American Sentiments in South Korea” explained that:

Opposition activists, particularly college students and intellectuals, became radicalized and adopted strong anti-U.S. views... The group Jusapa... emerged and became widely supported by student activists in the mid-1980s. Along with other radical groups, Jusapa gained influence by getting its members elected to leadership positions in student governments at major universities. Aside from the small core of serious radicals, most Jusapa members did not seem aware of the full implications of some of the activists’ pro-North Korean aims. Rather, many followers were intelligent and idealistic students, the sons and daughters of the prospering middle class. Most supported Jusapa not because they were pro-North Korea but because they believed that the organization was at the forefront of the pro-democracy movement.<sup>304</sup>

Likewise, Mi Park discerned such a progressive-nationalist rationale in her 2007 analysis of the South Korean trade union movement. She concluded that “*Jusapa* is thoroughly Korean nationalist imbued with cultish ideas of Kim Il-Sung.” She further found that “the Korean Left can be divided into two opposing political camps: *Jusapa* (NL) [National Liberation Party] and non-*Jusapa* (ND and PD) [National Democracy Party and People’s Democracy Party].” Park pointed out that “NL included Jusapa as well as all radical nationalists who did not necessarily subscribe to Kim Il-Sung’s *Juche* ideology.”<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Kyung-Ae Park, “Sources Of North Korea’s Foreign Policy Leverage Toward The U.S.: The Case Of The Nuclear Deal,” in *Korea in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Seung-Ho Joo and Tae-Hwan Kwak (Huntington, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2001), 145.

<sup>304</sup> Chang Hun Oh and Celeste Arrington, “Democratization and Changing Anti-American Sentiments in South Korea,” *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (March 1, 2007): 337, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2008).

<sup>305</sup> Mi Park, “South Korean Trade Union Movement at the Crossroads: A Critique of ‘Social-Movement’ Unionism,” *Critical Sociology* 33, (January 2007): 335, <http://crs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/33/1-2/311> (accessed May 10, 2008). “The South Korean left of the 1980s consisted of three main political camps: those of NL (National Liberation), ND (National Democracy), and PD (People’s Democracy). The ND and PD camp followed Leninism, while the NL (National Liberation) camp adhered to *Jucheism*.”

However, in 2006 Jiyon Shin observed that, in the wake of South Korea's progressing democratization, liberalization and sustained economic performance, some "former North Korea sympathizers — *Jusapas*...are [South] Korea's leading new right intellectuals." She explained that "Many of the new right movement's leaders have leftist backgrounds," and "converted from communist inclinations (*Jusapa*) to conservatism."<sup>306</sup> These members of the so called "386 generation provided the main support base"<sup>307</sup> for President Roh Moo-hyun's 2002 election, which was described as a "culmination of the textbook case of democratic consolidation."<sup>308</sup>

Similarly, a 2006 Strategic Studies Institute publication conceded that:

The "386" generation... have been a political force since the Chun Doo Hwan administration, but with the election of President Roh Moo Hyun in December 2002, they have entered the corridors of power... Some have espoused looking at things from a North Korean point of view. Some from the *jusapa*, the National Liberation faction, are flat-out pro-North Korea. The "spirit of 6.15" and the rhetoric of *han minjok* (a single unitary race) are distilled in a powerful call for the cultural and racial unity of "fellow brothers" in a unified Korea. They have unwittingly inherited the nationalistic argument from the over-confident South

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<sup>306</sup> Jiyon Shin, "A New Socio-Political Breeze in South Korea: The New Right and New Left," *Issues & Insights* 6, no. 18 (Pacific Forum CSIS, Honolulu Hawaii, December 2006): 6, [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/issuesinsights\\_v06n18.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/issuesinsights_v06n18.pdf) (accessed May 10, 2008). "Many of the new right movement's leaders have leftist backgrounds: in the '70s and '80s they fought anticommunist dictators. The main leaders, such as Shin Ji-ho, Hong Jin-pyo, Han Ki-hong, and Kim Young-hwan are intellectuals in their late 30s or 40s, or are from the so-called 386 generation: people in their 30s who attended college in the '80s and were born in the '60s, who converted from communist inclinations (*Jusapa*) to conservatism."

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* See note 301 for an explanation of the term "386 generation."

<sup>308</sup> Carl Baker, "Korea: Challenges For Democratic Consolidation," in *The Asia-Pacific A Region in Transition*, ed. Jim Rolfe, (Honolulu, HI: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004), 178, <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/RegionalFinal%20chapters/Chapter11Baker.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2008). "In many ways the election of Roh Moo-hyun in 2002 represents the culmination of the textbook case of [South Korea's] democratic consolidation. As a civil rights lawyer who advocated the removal of US forces in the 1980s Roh represents the antithesis of the restrictive ideological perspective and tight central control present at the start of the consolidation in 1987. The process of systematically incorporating increasingly radical elements of the population into the political system with each subsequent administration has been truly remarkable."

Korean conservatives of the 1980s who boasted that North Korean nuclear weapons should not be worrisome because ‘it will be ours one day’ (after unification).<sup>309</sup>

Mi Park, in her 2005 analysis of South Korean underground student movements in the 1980s, endorsed such a theory of political activists’ conversion in post-Cold War South Korea.<sup>310</sup> She made the point that the “ideologies of the South Korean left began to change, as an increasing number of activists saw new social developments contradicting their ideas.”<sup>311</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the conversion of *jusapa* activists to conservatism appears to coincide with the undoubtedly disillusioning 1997 defection of Pyongyang’s leading Juche ideologist Hwang Jang-yop,<sup>312</sup> the unveiling of the ravages of the North Korean famine, and the general

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<sup>309</sup> Stephen J. Kim, “Alternative Proliferation And Alliance Futures In East Asia,” in *Taming the Next Set of Strategic Weapons Threats*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 10, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB707.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2008). The term “spirit of 6.15” refers to the historic summit meeting of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and the D.P.R.K.’s National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong-il from 13-15 June 2000 in Pyongyang. The resulting 15 June 2000 (6.15) “South-North Joint Declaration” states that “the meeting and the summit talks were of great significance in promoting mutual understanding, developing South-North relations and realizing peaceful reunification.” The declaration is the first “agreement... signed in South-North Summit talks in the 55 years since the division of the [Korean] nation,” and was regarded a hallmark in Korean reconciliation. KOREA.net, “The South-North Joint Declaration: Analysis and Prospects,” The Korean Culture and Information Service (KOIS), June 15, 2000, [http://www.korea.net/News/issues/issueDetailView.asp?board\\_no=218](http://www.korea.net/News/issues/issueDetailView.asp?board_no=218) (accessed May 10, 2008). Accordingly, a United Nations press release states that “The Secretary-General [Kofi Annan] congratulates the two leaders for the vision and statesmanship they have demonstrated. He is convinced that the continuation of the dialogue between the two sides will have a most beneficial impact on relations between them, and on the well-being of the Korean people, as well as on regional peace and security.” United Nations, “Secretary-General Welcomes South-North Joint Declaration Issued at Conclusion of Historic Korean Summit,” <http://www.un.org/news/Press/docs/2000/20000615.sgsm7454.doc.html> (accessed May 10, 2008). President Chun Doo-hwan (1980 to 1988) was a former ROK Army general. For his role in the 1980 Gwangju massacre, Chun Doo-hwan received the death sentence in 1996. Intervention by President-elect Kim Dae-jung led to his eventual reprieve by sitting President Kim Young-sam. In the 1980s, oppositional left-wing liberal politician Kim Dae-jung himself had been sentenced to death under Chun Doo-hwan, who eventually had commuted Kim's sentence in return for U.S. support.

<sup>310</sup> Mi Park described the “great inventiveness and resourcefulness” of the “South Korean underground student movements [, which] have been by and large hidden from history.” She found that the student movements were the driving force behind successfully mobilizing South Korean society towards democratization during the 1980s. Park, “Organizing Dissent against Authoritarianism: The South Korean Student Movement in the 1980s.” 262.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>312</sup> French, *North Korea: The Paranoid Peninsula*, 43-44 and 295, fn. 12. Apart from Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, “another figure credited with being a major influence on the theoretical foundations of Juche is former DPRK Secretary for International Affairs Hwang Jang-yop... Hwang defected to South Korea in 1997, at the age of 74 – the first high-level official to seek asylum in the South... Hwang lives in South Korea in a guarded safe house... visiting Washington in October 2003, despite D.P.R.K. threats to ‘shoot down his plane out of the sky’. Following his defection Hwang’s wife and daughter reportedly committed suicide, while his other children and grandchildren are rumoured [sic] to be in prison camps.”

manifestation of the Pyongyang regime's failure.<sup>313</sup> One of the 386 generation's alleged main leaders of South Korea's new right movement, for example, was at the center of a 1999 espionage scandal.<sup>314</sup> According to a 1999 *Asia Times* article, "Kim Young-hwan, one of the most prominent leaders of pro-Pyongyang 1980s student radicals who called themselves jusapa (juche ideology faction), is reported to have confessed that he was a spy for Pyongyang." The report maintains that Kim Young-hwan, on personal orders from Kim Il-sung, had instigated a "pro-Pyongyang underground" and had launched a "legal political party in the South...bringing in other veterans of the [South Korean] student anti-government movement." After becoming "disillusioned with the North Korean system he was promoting," Kim Young-hwan came to condemn Juche in 1995 and, "in fear for his life, fled to China." The article explains that "Only recently did he return home and spill the beans," as the South Korean "prosecution has recommended leniency for him and a colleague."<sup>315</sup>

Rim Kyu-jin, editorial writer for the internet news portal *donga.com*, commented in a similarly sardonic fashion in a 2005 opinion piece on South Korea's "New Right's Teaching Materials:"

These days, leftist student activists are said to be reading sophisticated books such as "Capital beyond Capital" (Lee Jin-kyung). It is relieving to know that few students memorize like parrots the Pyongyang broadcast such as Jusapa, who advocated the Juche ideology of Kim Il Sung, did so in the past.<sup>316</sup>

Correspondingly, Mi Park had offered a comparable assessment one month earlier:

Most activists in the 1990s abandoned the idea that the Soviet Union and North Korea represented alternative societies. They reformulated movement strategies and tactics in accordance with a new perception of social reality. An increasing

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<sup>313</sup> Bradley Martin, "Pyongyang Watch: Spy stories," *Asia Times Online*, September 18, 1999, <http://www.atimes.com/koreas/AI18Dg02.html> (accessed May 10, 2008). "And in 1997, no less a figure than Hwang Jang-yop, the North Korean senior official widely credited with having developed the juche ideology, defected to the South."

<sup>314</sup> Shin, "A New Socio-Political Breeze," 6. "The main leaders, such as Shin Ji-ho, Hong Jin-pyo, Han Ki-hong, and Kim Young-hwan are intellectuals in their late 30s or 40s, or are from the so-called 386 generation."

<sup>315</sup> Martin, "Pyongyang Watch: Spy stories."

<sup>316</sup> Kyu-jin Rim, "The New Right's Teaching Materials," *donga.com*, November 9, 2005, <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2005110931718> (accessed May 10, 2008).

number of activists believed that a project of developing a democratic ‘civil society’ should replace the call for revolution.<sup>317</sup>

However, a significant measure of progressive pro-Pyongyang activism, combined with anti-U.S. sentiment, seems latent among South Korean intellectuals and members of the educated middle-class. *The Chosun Ilbo*, for example, reported in 2006 on the investigation of a “middle school teacher and member of the Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union [KTEWU].” The teacher was “under investigation for taking his 180 students to an event commemorating the deaths of communist partisan guerrillas.” Reportedly, the tribute had been “organized by an ‘unconverted’ long-term prisoner, a term referring to convicts who served on average 31 years in jail for violating the [South Korean] National Security Law and refusing to disavow their communist beliefs.” *The Chosun Ilbo* maintains that the KTEWU has “frequently revealed a political bias,” in particular during tutorials which “borrowed heavily from a North Korean history textbook hailing and praising North Korean leader Kim Jong-il’s Songun or military-first policy.”<sup>318</sup>

In her 2005 article “Organizing Dissent against Authoritarianism,” Mi Park offered remarkable insights about the scope, the societal penetration, and the domestic effects of the “South Korean Student Movement in the 1980s.” She argued that:

The significance of the ‘386 generation’ is that the historical experience of the turbulent 1970s (the Yusin system) and 1980 (the Gwangju massacre) shaped the common generational consciousness of youths and this consciousness, in turn, became the basis of the political mobilization of students in the 1980s.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Park, “Organizing Dissent against Authoritarianism: The South Korean Student Movement in the 1980s,” *Korea Journal* 45, no. 3 (October 1, 2005): 285, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed April 20, 2008).

<sup>318</sup> Chosun Ilbo, “Union Teacher Took Charges to Communist Nostalgia Bash,” *Digital Chosun Ilbo*, December 6, 2006, <http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200612/200612060011.html> (accessed May 10, 2008).

<sup>319</sup> Park, “Organizing Dissent against Authoritarianism,” 264, 267. “The Park regime (1961-1979) carried out industrialization chiefly by means of repressive labor policies and the draconian Yusin constitution. Under the Yusin system, all restrictions on civil liberties were justified primarily by the need to discipline the workforce in the face of danger from North Korea, and such restrictions were used almost exclusively to enforce a low wage policy... Industrial conflicts were identified as tantamount to communist politics and no institutional channels were allowed for resolving grievances in the labor sector... In a nutshell, the South Korean governments justified the authoritarian rule of society in the name of national security, thus enabling state-led capitalist development.”

Mi Park reasoned that the 1980 Gwangju massacre in particular was a turning point “for the Korean student movement” towards “the clearly stated goal” of “revolution.”<sup>320</sup> In her view, the Gwangju massacre “discredited moderate political voices in the democratization movement and prepared the stage for a more radical movement.”<sup>321</sup> Simultaneously, it acted as a “historical catalyst” for “intellectuals and university students” to become “the vanguard of the *uisikhwa* (consciousness raising) movement,”<sup>322</sup> and promoted a “Marxist intellectual movement that flourished in the 1980s.”<sup>323</sup>

Mi Park’s detailed analysis of the methods and organization of the students, and their movement’s strategy to achieve a broad popular mobilization and politization holds a particular significance. According to her research, the 1980s student movement did not remain confined to college and university campuses or to a limited number of leftist intellectuals. Instead, Mi Park draws a comprehensive picture of the student left capitalizing on widespread domestic societal grievances in the face of a diminishing Cold War communist threat, and successfully “organizing the masses” against the authoritarian South Korean regime.<sup>324</sup> According to Mi Park:

These underground student organizations played an instrumental role in facilitating grass-roots organizations ranging from independent student councils to independent trade unions. The concerted organizing efforts made by the student movement culminated in the two historic mass mobilizations of 1987 in which over a million people participated in illegal street demonstrations against the Chun administration.<sup>325</sup>

Mi Park asserted that the South Korean “student generation of the 1980s played a pivotal role in the democratization of South Korean society.”<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 265. “General Chun Doo-hwan... carried out a military coup and took power by crushing domestic opposition [in December 1979]. In May 1980, General Chun and his military cronies massacred hundreds of civilians who had been protesting against the coup in the southern city of Gwangju. Shortly after the massacre, Chun made himself president of South Korea.”

<sup>321</sup> Park, “Organizing Dissent against Authoritarianism,” 266.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 273. “The universal labelling of all social discontent as communist-inspired activity, combined with imprisonment, executions, and police violence, all bred a general disbelief in government claims. The threat of imminent war with the North did not scare the population as a whole, because the [Korean] war was fast becoming a distant memory.”

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 286.

In conclusion, the evidence presented above — based on certain aspects of the 1980s radical student movement and its strong influence on South Korea’s democratization process — is certainly not sufficient to support conclusive judgments as to whether Juche could appeal to South Korea’s society. However, the 386 generation’s evolution from a radical, left-wing student movement, via a grass-roots mass mobilization, to a current of opinion penetrating South Korea’s political establishment — even parts of the political new right — indicates a significant qualitative socio-cultural and political evolution.

It can be argued that the 1980s radical student movement and the democratization process have potentially exposed South Korean society and its political elites to a variety of political influences, including North Korea’s Juche ideas. Consequently, the case can be made that the South Korean democratic policy space, while not likely to spontaneously and comprehensively embrace North Korea’s Juche idea, is almost certainly sufficiently mature and open to publicly debate and eventually connect with specific elements of Juche. In particular, Juche’s essential elements of nationalism and self-determination — if disassociated from Marxist-Leninist ideology and the veneration of the Kim dynasty — could offer grounds for socio-cultural and political appeal and identification north and south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Thus, South Korea’s developmental path and its recent democratization movement may have laid the basis to utilize certain appealing cultural and nationalistic elements of Juche as a pathway for eventual socio-cultural Korean re-unification. Accordingly, Colonel Jiyul Kim, Director of Asian Studies at the U.S. Army War College, made the point that “pan-Korean nationalism and anti-Great Power-ism” were the “two major ideological trends” that were “gaining momentum in South Korea.” In his 2005 study entitled “Pan-Korea Nationalism, Anti-Great Power-ism and U.S.-South Korean Relations,” he predicted a consequent “significant shift in the locus of political interest and power” in South Korea. In Kim’s analysis, “pan-Korean nationalism” illustrated “the sense of Korean nationalism in South Korea that embraces north and south,” while the term “anti-Great Power-ism” described “the desire of Koreans to escape from the sort of Great Power exploitation and victimization, actual and perceived, that the Korean peninsula has experienced since the latter half of the 19th century.”<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Jiyul Kim, “Pan-Korea Nationalism, Anti-Great Power-ism and U.S.-South Korean Relations,” *Japan Focus*, December 13, 2005, <http://www.japanfocus.org/products/details/1679> (accessed May 10, 2008): 1.

At the same time, Edward A. Olsen observed that “what exists today in South Korea and North Korea amounts to ‘semi-nationalism.’” He reasoned that “each half of today’s Korea” perceived and utilized “their ethnic nation’s heritage...very differently [according] to how their portion of Korean society functions.”<sup>328</sup> In his view, “what constitutes North Korea’s form of semi-nationalism domestically” is a “very nationalistic form of socialism,” relating to “Korea’s pre-modern authoritarianism in the name of both ‘Koreanism’ and communism.”<sup>329</sup>

In contrast, South Koreans — due to their economic accomplishments and the country’s successful democratic transition — “became increasingly confident that the ROK was revitalizing Korea’s heritage.”<sup>330</sup> Edward A. Olsen explained that:

This amounted to different facets of South Korea’s semi-nationalism such as industrial pride based on the ROK’s economic achievements yielding what amounted to techno-nationalism, well received international cultural exchanges yielding what could be considered pop-culture semi-nationalism, and — due to how South Korean politicians restored full fledged democracy — an enormous level of genuine political semi-nationalism based on how South Koreans could effectively draw on Korean cultural traditions to create a form of political nationalism that the world at large could respect and that the North Koreans should envy.<sup>331</sup>

However, similar to the earlier discussed analyses of the South Korean democratization movement, Jiyul Kim observed “a generational shift...that arose as a result of the end of the Cold War and democratization.” In his view, since both developments “occurred almost simultaneously for South Korea in the late 1980s,” both tendencies are “particularly powerful today.”<sup>332</sup> Kim reasoned that:

Pan-Korean nationalism and anti-Great Power-ism are closely associated with changing notions of identity and nationalism...ideological forces that are driven by cultural factors such as the symbolism of historical experience or, more precisely, memory of that history.<sup>333</sup>

Therefore, he discerned an “important generational divide,” and a “deep division and disunity...between the young, many of whom would embrace and help the North, and the old,

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<sup>328</sup> Olsen, “Korean Nationalism,” 9.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>330</sup> Olsen, “Korean Nationalism,” 12.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Kim, “Pan-Korea Nationalism,” 1.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.



who hew to the anti-Communist anti-North Korea line that took root during the Korean War.”<sup>334</sup> Kim concluded that “the ideologies of pan-Korean nationalism and anti-Great Power-ism,” are among the “emerging political forces...that are creating the most important political fault lines” in South Korean politics today.<sup>335</sup> Accordingly, in his analysis:

The post-Korean War generation has matured and is poised to assume political leadership... Above all they reject the previous political paradigm that had functioned under the aegis of the Cold War and was based on intimate ties to the United States. They seek to realize the long held dream of achieving self-determination, a Korea that is master of its own fate and destiny, a destiny that promises greatness. In their eyes, such a destiny can only be predicated on peaceful reunification.<sup>336</sup>

Such an assessment seems to support the hypothesis that Juche elements of self-reliance, self-confidence, independence, and an inward-centered nationalism could indeed offer a significant appeal to today’s South Korean society and its political decision-makers. Olsen observed that:

Korean nationalists in both of the current Korean states take enormous pride in how their ancestors created an ethnic Korean nation state and how they generally coped with pressures from neighboring – but not always neighborly – China and, later on, Japan.<sup>337</sup>

Ultimately, utilizing such Juche elements to exploit Korean trends of “pan-Korean nationalism” and “anti-Great Power-ism” could hold the prospects to “very well resolve some of the thorniest security issues in the region.”<sup>338</sup>

Similarly, Olsen has argued that “it is very likely that Korean reunification shall be influenced by nationalistic sentiments,” and has recommended that “external powers...become far more attentive to why Korean nationalism matters to reshaping Korea.” He has asserted that “what amounts to a form of pan-Korean nationalism seems to be more salient for the inter-Korean dynamic [today] than it was in the past.”<sup>339</sup> Olsen has reasoned that today, North Korea claims to be more “Korean” than South Korea — owing to South Korea’s exposure to

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<sup>334</sup> Kim, “Pan-Korea Nationalism.”

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>336</sup> Kim, “Pan-Korea Nationalism,” 1-2.

<sup>337</sup> Olsen, “Korean Nationalism,” 6.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 18.

“globalism and the cultural and linguistic impacts of other countries, migration into South Korea, and fairly significant levels of inter-marriage with people from all over the world.” He maintained that such a stance “resonates with some ethnic ultra-nationalists in the ROK in ways that South Korean officials cannot ignore.”<sup>340</sup> Olsen has assessed that:

One aspect of this set of policy issues that has not received enough attention from the US policy perspective is how Korean nationalism functions in a reuniting divided nation. This lack may have a significant impact on US policy as the reunification process evolves.<sup>341</sup>

### **C. CONCLUSION: JUCHE — IDEOLOGICAL BARRIER OR PROSPECTIVE PATHWAY FOR KOREAN RE-UNIFICATION?**

In Chapter I it was hypothesized that Juche, as the conceptual frame of reference for North Korean society, may hold particular significance for a successful prospective Korean national re-unification. At the same time it was suggested that Juche’s potential role as an ideological barrier to — or pathway for — eventual Korean re-unification deserves further attention from scholars and political decision-makers. An appreciation for the frequently ignored but nonetheless important socio-cultural re-unification issues should be regarded as complementary to addressing potential economic and political re-unification matters. Regarding Juche as simply another tenuous version of Marxist-Leninist ideology, prone to rapidly implode at the outset of a re-unified Korea’s political and economic transformation, might underestimate the socio-cultural realities.

Consequently, Chapter II explored Juche’s utopian, ideological and religious elements to establish its holistic power, its authority, and its penetration of North Korean individual and societal life. It was concluded that Juche indeed holds the fundamentalist characteristics of an ideological state religion. It was further determined that Juche — in contrast with superficially adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology in East Germany and elsewhere in Eastern Europe — has exerted significant structural and emotional effects on the North Korean masses and elites. Accordingly, it was concluded that Juche fundamentalism, as a *mélange* of Confucian-inspired vision and utopian ideas, pseudo-scientific ideological ingredients from Marxism-Leninism, and religiously inspired cultic elements, constitutes a significant bulwark for the Pyongyang regime’s

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<sup>340</sup> Olsen, “Korean Nationalism,” 6.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

future survival. Combined with the Kim dynasty's theocratic rule — ingrained into North Korean society for more than half a century — Juche fundamentalism would hold substantial relevance upon eventual Korean national re-unification.

Subsequently, Chapter III established, based on examining German re-unification as an applicable comparative case, the significance for eventual socio-cultural re-unification of decades-long political, ideological, and cultural conditioning within discrete societies. It was concluded that the German “Unification Crisis” and “The Wall Inside The Minds” have persisted. Close to two decades, and an estimated €1.5 trillion beyond German re-unification, enduring socio-cultural tensions between East and West Germans, deriving from individual and societal receptiveness to, and the potency and the resilience of, ideology, emotional bonding, and societal conditioning, continue to be intrinsic and basic factors affecting national cohesion.

Chapter IV revealed significant parallels in East German and North Korean social structures. Though to a lesser degree than in North Korea, the G.D.R.'s society was similarly anti-liberal and anti-libertarian. Its hierarchical societal organization, akin to that in North Korea, was based on class background and political reliability (*Linientreue*) towards the SED party. Hence, it was concluded that socio-cultural issues identified in the wake of the German re-unification would probably hold similar relevance upon eventual Korean re-unification.

The final chapter's first two sections ascertained that Juche has great inherent adaptability and fundamentalist potency. For this reason, regardless of North Korea's present and future economic situation, material scarcity, privation and famine, Juche is likely to persevere as “the collective consciousness of the ‘Kim-country’ masses focused on Juche purity.”<sup>342</sup> It will therefore probably persist as the ironclad legitimizing foundation for the regime of Kim Jong-il and his eventual dynastic successor. At the same time, it was assessed that South Korea's particular path of democratization could hold significant prospects for specific Juche elements to appeal to South Korean society. Juche's essential elements of nationalism, self-determination, and self-reliance — if disassociated from Marxist-Leninist ideology — could offer future potential for political attraction and socio-cultural identity-building for both Korean societies.

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<sup>342</sup> Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study*, 349.

Overall, this study's findings support the following five assessments. First, the hypothesis that North Korea's Juche idea has indeed become a fundamental and deeply penetrating framework of orientation for North Koreans can be validated. In essence and in consequence, Juche's synthesis of utopian ideas, deeply penetrating ideology, and devout state religion compares with other current fundamentalist belief systems and regimes.

Second, despite noteworthy differences between the German and the Korean cases, the two share significant commonalities with regard to their societal, political, and economic realities that underline the relevance and applicability of the comparative cases. A comparable multi-decade divergence in political, ideological, and cultural conditioning, it can be reasoned, has developed a significant qualitative disparity in the two Korean societies. Such pre-unification differences, the German case suggests, are likely to display prolonged perseverance well into the post-unification era, and may develop into significant antagonistic cross-currents during a re-unified Korea's political and economic transformation. At the same time, the German case offers evidence as to the substantial amount of treasure that would potentially be required, not only to promote political and economic transformation, but to mitigate the adverse socio-cultural effects of re-unifying the Korean societies.

Third, North Korea's Juche could raise challenges for national social cohesion upon Korea's re-unification that would be more serious than those faced by the re-unified German state and society. The Kim dynasty's theocratic rule and Juche's fundamentalist characteristics — apparent in an analysis of comparable fundamentalist Muslim belief systems — are particularly distinctive and at variance with the G.D.R.'s relatively mild "Real Existing Socialism." Consequently, Korean socio-cultural re-unification can be expected to suffer tremendously from phenomena similar to, but significantly more pronounced than, the German "Unification Crisis" and "The Wall Inside The Minds."

Fourth, North Korean realities are different from those which prevailed under former East European Communist regimes, including that in East Germany. In comparison with North Korea, the East German Communist governments relied on a limpid ideology and a half-hearted isolation and oppression of their populations. North Korea's theocratic regime and its Juche fundamentalism are as unlikely to collapse in the face of famine and economic decline today as they have been for more than a decade. The example of other fundamentalist belief systems

warrants the inference that hunger, poverty, and material deprivation are unlikely to be effective incentives for the deeply indoctrinated North Korean people to defy their theocratic rulers. As long as Pyongyang's pervasive political ideology of Juche remains interlocked with the religiously penetrating Kim cult, enforced and adapted by the living god Kim Jong-il, North Korean society's disposition to suffer through further famine and decline might turn out to be virtually infinite. Despite continued decay, the ultimate collapse and implosion of the hermit kingdom might thus be in the distant future. It can further be argued that continued sanctions, isolation, and aggressive containment attempts vis-à-vis North Korea will have little prospect of bringing about regime change in Pyongyang. Rather, in view of Juche's fundamentalist character and its pervasive societal penetration, the opposite outcome could be predicted. In a behavior pattern typical for fundamentalist belief systems and their communities, North Korean society might be propelled and motivated to a willingness to suffer above and beyond contemporary Muslim fundamentalist examples. Accordingly, rather than emphasizing Pyongyang's putative irrationality, Juche's fundamentalist character and its staying power need to be acknowledged by political decision-makers engaged with Korean issues. Successful future engagement strategies towards North Korea should be defined on the basis of a solid understanding of North Korea's Juche idea as a conceptually holistic and fundamentalist frame of reference for the Kim regime's political choices and decisions.

Finally, it can be deduced that at present, North Korea's Juche fundamentalism constitutes an ideological barrier to successful socio-cultural Korean re-unification. At the same time, however, it can be speculated that Juche's potential for targeted redefinition, on the one hand, and the prospective appeal of its cultural and nationalistic elements, on the other hand, could in some circumstances serve as promising assets for a positive future development of the Korean issue. In contrast to other religions, whose ancient scriptures are subject to more or less orthodox interpretation only, Juche offers a wide range of development options. Its living god, Kim Jong-il, is the master of the cult; and he may be capable of modifying, adapting, and adjusting his state religion's goals and ambitions to satisfy his regime's requirements. Kim Jong-il's utilization of Juche for a successful power transition, and Juche's simultaneous manipulation towards the "Military-First policy" and the "Red Flag ideology" to secure his regime, are significant indicators of such potential.

It goes without saying that Juche's cultic deification of the Kim dynasty holds no potential appeal for the South Korean society. Consequently, engineering a Juche evolution towards its more appealing cultural and nationalistic facets, and away from its Kim cult veneration, could hold the key for Juche's eventual re-unification utility. It remains to be seen, however, whether the recent modification of the official D.P.R.K. webpage and its apparent abandonment of traditional Kim cult veneration (as discussed in Chapter II), at least on the World Wide Web, could serve as an indicator for such a development in progress.<sup>343</sup>

Hence, future scholarly interest and concentrated research are warranted, not only on both sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, to establish a roadmap as to whether and how it might be possible to utilize Juche and its potential appeal to South Koreans to benefit eventual Korean re-unification. Though re-unification appears to be essentially an inter-Korean issue, the role of external powers in providing a favorable environment for solving the Korean issue should not be underestimated. The German re-unification experience suggests that international consent, stewardship, honest mediation and brokerage may be essential and instrumental to ultimately terminate Korea's decade-long division.

Accordingly, assessing Juche's utility for eventual successful Korean re-unification might not be a task limited exclusively to the two Korean states. Instead, in addition, and complementary to political and economic support for Korean re-unification, Juche's soft-power significance and its potential for engineered evolution should be recognized. External powers should provide and support incentives — for both Korean states — to develop and utilize constructive elements of Juche as a pathway to successful Korean socio-cultural re-unification, to the ultimate benefit of future stability on the Korean peninsula and in Asia.

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<sup>343</sup> In March 2008, the "DPR Korea, Official Webpage" (<http://www.korea-dpr.com/pmenu.htm>) described the "Leaders" of the D.P.R.K. as "the sun of the nation and mankind." In May 2008 this URL was no longer active. A modified "DPR Korea, Official Webpage" (<http://www.korea-dpr.com/>) no longer utilizes such ornate language to portray the D.P.R.K. leaders. However, "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung's Autobiography — an epic work of 24 Chapters and 2161 pages — is still available as a 7.22MB PDF version (see <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/202.pdf>). In comparison, the 1982 "new King James version" of the Holy Bible, "containing the Old and New Testaments" comprises 1236 pages (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version, Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1982)). In contrast, "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-il's "Brief History" contains a mere 160 pages (see <http://www.korea-dpr.com/library/103.pdf> for the PDF document). See Chapter II, note 115.

It is conceivable, for example, that the Kaesong Industrial Complex (K.I.C.) could offer such potential for U.S.-promoted incentives.<sup>344</sup> The K.I.C., it could be argued, strengthens inter-Korean cooperation and reconciliation, and resonates with pan-Korean notions of self-reliance, self-determination, and national accomplishment. At the same time, Washington's consent to a modified "Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA)" to include goods manufactured at the K.I.C. could significantly boost the K.I.C.'s economic relevance and consequently enhance its utility for inter-Korean reconciliation.<sup>345</sup> To complement this economic step, the U.S. could utilize its international weight to press for a Korean War peace treaty, thereby creating a favorable environment for normalized relations between the two states on the Korean peninsula. It can be reasonably argued that the prevalent framework of the 1953 "Armistice Agreement for the Restoration of the South Korean State" is ill-suited to promote twenty-first century reconciliation and a normalization of relations among the belligerents.<sup>346</sup> At the same time, U.S. agreement to North Korea's long desired U.S.-D.P.R.K. non-aggression pact could have a significantly catalytic effect on such a process.

Similarly creative and beneficial ventures could be imagined in cooperation with Korea's neighbors in the region. Japan and the P.R.C., for example, could utilize their historical ties and their cultural affiliation with the Korean people to acknowledge the potential of Juche's

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<sup>344</sup> The Kaesong Industrial Complex (K.I.C.) is an inter-Korean economic joint venture to promote cooperation and North-South Korean reconciliation in the realm of South Korea's "Sunshine Policy." For details see: Dick K. Nanto and Mark E. Manyin, "The Kaesong North-South Korean Industrial Complex," *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress* (CRS Order Code RL34093, July 19, 2007).

<sup>345</sup> According to the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA), the duty-free entry of South Korean goods into the United States does not include goods from the Kaesong Industrial Complex (K.I.C.). The agreement's Annex 22-B, however, offers the inclusion of Outward Processing Zones (O.P.Z.). Declaring the K.I.C. such an Outward Processing Zone would enormously boost the venture's economic significance. For more detailed information on the K.I.C. see: Nanto and Manyin. "The Kaesong North-South Korean Industrial Complex."

<sup>346</sup> The "Armistice Agreement for the Restoration of the South Korean State... signed on July 27, 1953 formally ended the war in Korea. North and South Korea remain separate and occupy almost the same territory they had when the war began... It was the end of the longest negotiated armistice in history: 158 meetings spread over two years and 17 days... The Korean Armistice Agreement is somewhat exceptional in that it is purely a military document [;] no nation is a signatory to the agreement. Specifically the Armistice Agreement: 1. suspended open hostilities; 2. withdrew all military forces and equipment from a 4,000-meter-wide zone, establishing the Demilitarized Zone as a buffer between the forces; 3. prevented both sides from entering the air, ground, or sea areas under control of the other; 4. arranged release and repatriation of prisoners of war and displaced persons; and 5. established the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and other agencies to discuss any violations and to ensure adherence to the truce terms. The armistice, while it stopped hostilities, was not a permanent peace treaty between nations." See: "Armistice Agreement for the Restoration of the South Korean State (1953)," Historical Documents in United States History, <http://www.historicaldocuments.com/KoreanWarArmistice.htm> (accessed May 23, 2008). For the transcript of the original document see: <http://www.historicaldocuments.com/KoreanWarArmisticeTranscript.htm> (accessed May 23, 2008).

constructive elements for Korean re-unification. After the eventual resolution of perpetually volatile issues like the “comfort women,”<sup>347</sup> the “Japanese reparations,”<sup>348</sup> or those of the “Japanese abductees”<sup>349</sup> to name just a few, Japan could be in a suitable position to encourage Juche’s adaptation to a healthy unified Korean identity.

At the same time, traditionally cultivated strong ties between North Korea and China seem to combine effectively with a continuously improving Seoul-Beijing relationship and could justify a prominent role for China as an honest and credible broker for the benefit of a unified Korea.<sup>350</sup> In such a capacity, China could, for example, host and support a future “Pan-Korean Institute for Socio-Cultural Re-Unification Studies,” as a forum for research and scholarly discourse as well as cooperative interaction between scientists and political decision-makers.

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<sup>347</sup> Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 178-179. Cumings observed that the Japanese “sexual slavery” of Korean “comfort women” between 1942 and 1945 “fractured the Korean national psyche, pitting Korean against Korean with consequences that continue down to our time,” because “many [Korean] women were mobilized by [collaborating] Korean men.”

<sup>348</sup> Mark E. Manyin, “North Korea-Japan Relations: The Normalization Talks and the Compensation/Reparations Issue,” *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress* (CRS Order Code RS20526, 2001): 2-3, [http://www.fcnl.org/pdfs/01june13\\_nk-japan.pdf](http://www.fcnl.org/pdfs/01june13_nk-japan.pdf) (accessed May 23, 2008). According to a 2001 CRS Report for Congress, “Some Japanese experts believe that North Korea will ask for a settlement in the \$20 billion range... According to one report in the Japanese press, Japanese officials in October 2000 were considering a \$9 billion package... Japan is refusing North Korea’s demand that the package be labeled as ‘reparations,’ or even ‘compensation.’ Instead, Tokyo has offered to characterize the monies as ‘economic assistance,’ as it did in the 1965 Japan-South Korean normalization negotiations... Additionally, North Korea is demanding that Japan issue a formal, ‘legally binding apology’ from the Japanese emperor and/or prime minister. Japan has countered that a sufficient apology was extended as part of [the] 1995 statement by then-Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama expressing regret for Japan’s past actions.”

<sup>349</sup> “Police question S. Korean actress over Japanese abductees,” *Asian Political News*, March 16, 2008, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0WDQ/is\\_2008\\_March\\_16/ai\\_n25157309](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0WDQ/is_2008_March_16/ai_n25157309) (accessed May 23, 2008). During Japanese “Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s landmark visit to North Korea” in 2002, “Kim [Jong-il] admitted to the abductions of 13 Japanese in the late 1970s and early 1980s by North Korean agents. Pyongyang maintains... [that] eight [abductees] have died, a claim disputed by their families and the Japanese government which officially recognizes 17 abductees. Japan’s National Police Agency currently has a total of four North Korean agents on the international wanted list for their alleged involvement in the kidnapping.”

<sup>350</sup> Aruna Lee and Peter Schurmann, “South Korean Embassies in China Turn Away Escapees from North,” *New America Media*, News Feature, January 25, 2007, [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=af5132ae2b1e428f9e88643641a32c17](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=af5132ae2b1e428f9e88643641a32c17) (accessed May 23, 2008). A 2007 New America Media (NAM) article – referring to reports from the Korean-language *Chosun Daily* and *The Korea Times* – described how “[South] Korean embassies in China are coming under harsh criticism for their recent mishandling of several cases involving South Korean citizens who fled North Korea and were reportedly turned away by their own embassies in China... One editorial in the Chosun Daily bitterly accused the South Korean government of turning its back on its own people... South Korean embassies in China face a difficult task in handling North Korean defectors, whom Beijing insists are economic migrants, not political refugees. Many remain in hiding, fearful of apprehension by Chinese authorities and deportation back to the North, where most face imprisonment or death. Pressured by Beijing, South Korean embassies remain reluctant to open their doors to asylum seekers, despite South Korean law, which recognizes all North Koreans as citizens of the South.” Such a harsh South Korean policy towards North Korean refugees on Chinese soil might be an indicator for Seoul’s implicit efforts to prevent a tarnishing of fertile relations with Beijing.



In sum, a concerted engagement effort by key external powers — not only in the political and economic realm, but on a broad socio-cultural level — could indeed lay the ground for eventual successful Korean re-unification. Ultimately, the constructive elements in Juche could offer an entry strategy towards such an effort in order to bring a conclusive solution to the long-standing Korean conflict, so that it will no longer be a source of dispute and instability throughout the Asian region, with potentially global repercussions.

Consequently, the potential utility of certain aspects of Juche for the socio-cultural dimensions of Korean unification should be acknowledged, planned for and exploited while time permits. Despite the prospective staying power of Juche and the predicted perseverance of the Kim dynasty, the German experience has shown how unexpectedly and rapidly a failed state's collapse can come about. Failure to undertake timely preparations or continued exclusive focus on the political and economic issues associated with Korean re-unification — to the neglect of socio-cultural and ideological factors — would probably be dearly paid for in the post-unification era and would significantly impede Korea's successful socio-cultural re-unification in the long term.

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